



REAL WOMEN!

Stormy Weather Approaching

**R. E. A. L.
Women!
R. elevant
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Inside this issue:

Stormy weather cont	2
The Godly Gossip	2
Conflict Resolution	3
Legacy	4

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Stormy weather ahead. How's your emergency preparedness? Do you have your extra batteries, water and food? These are good things to have during the winter or in some regions even summer storm season. But just as there are natural seasons of physical storms there are other storms on the horizon. How prepared are you spiritually and emotionally for the current uncertainty in our world's economy? Are you in a spiritual storm or relationship storm? We must prepare our minds for action and be able to rightly discern the times and seasons of our lives.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 instructs us: *When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider.* Consider: to think of especially with regard to taking some action; to gaze on steadily or reflectively; to think about carefully. Each of these aspects of the word "consider" implies the taking of time to think things through, not responding rashly or carelessly. Storms reveal many things. They reveal how much faith we really have. They reveal if we have been wise or foolish, building our life on the Rock or on the sands of the world. These are not "fun" tests! Neither does the Lord send them as punishment or torments. They are part of life and He uses them

not only for our good but also for the good of those around us.

Life is always challenging. It consists of so many different aspects: marriage, family, co-worker and friend relationships; health issues, job related decisions, church concerns, and financial challenges. Each one of these separate topics can be broken down into a myriad of other problems or blessings. They each can have good times and bad—sometimes happening simultaneously. Listening to the news we are bombarded with powerful words like "soaring gas prices", "slumping sales", "U.S. at the Guillotine". How do we combat the facts with the truth? These words can open the flood gates of fear, which can paralyze us for Godly action. However, we must operate in faith, not fear. God's Word is stable, strong and powerful. It is there to help us understand how to access His supply during these difficult days.

Now is the time to dig deep into His Word, His Wisdom and His Will. Times of testing reveal exactly where our roots have been resting. The word "consider" means to think about carefully. It is definitely a word that should accompany preparing your mind for action. Complaining, criticizing or even cursing our government or leaders

will never bring about the positive change we actually need. Right now our world is facing economic and weather related issues. Godly wisdom is needed. Perhaps your personal world is so pressed in that you cannot even see past your own situation; much less have a global viewpoint. But dear ones, God views our lives and this world from the view of eternity. He gives us clarity and understanding in scripture that these things will be happening. I must confess that I would rather live in days of prosperity and blessing. Who wouldn't? However, each one of us must remember that we are born for such a time as this. He has a plan for us individually. He knows your mortgage situation, He is aware of how much your food budget and gas budget has been stressed, and He is still a way maker.

Matthew 5:16 instructs us to *"Let our light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."* Good works are not simply expected during times of prosperity, but also during times of difficulty. It is during the darker times that our light makes even more of an impact for His Kingdom. Matthew 8:23-27 tells the story of Jesus, His disciples and the sudden appearance of a great



Fear not,
You will not perish, if
you stand on the
Rock.

(Continued from page 1)

“tempest” or storm that arose so intensely that the boat was covered with waves: Jesus responded to their cries of “Lord, save us! We are perishing” with “Why are you fearful? O, you of little faith?” In Mark 4:40, He asks “How is it you have no faith?” The faith Jesus is referring to is the faith that is able to allow us to trust God’s helping power during crisis times. Have you been building your house upon the Rock or the sand? (see Matthew 7:24-27)

Suppose these past few months have revealed that part of your spiritual “house” has not been built on the Rock. Instead you find yourself with sand. It is not too late to retrofit those shaky areas of your life.

* First acknowledge the sand. Do not continue building on a faulty foundation.

*Go back to the Lord in prayer. Confess that you are fearful and nervous about your present of future. Talk to Him about it. Ask Him to show you where you need to make changes.

*Limit your intake of “bad news”. It can dilute our faith.

Pray for our leaders to make wise decisions. Get back to the Word of God. In every building project a plumb line is needed. Scripture must be our plumb line.

*Read the gospels paying attention to Jesus’ words of life, hope and instruction. Follow those instructions.

*Read the book of Acts. Watch how the early church applied those instructions and see when they Holy Spirit functioned as guide, power, teacher and comforter.

*Read the Psalms. These are full of comfort, instruction and encouragement to trust in our God.

*Read Hebrews 11 and 12. Discover once again the faithful heroes of our faith. Go back and re-read and study of their lives in their own context. Remember they were flesh and blood as we are. They had to cope with famines, disease, and even disappointing leaders. They suffered persecution unto death, and yet they still stood because the Holy Spirit was able to sustain them, as He is with us.

*Remember our God is a present help in the time of trouble and difficulty and He desires to use us to encourage those who do not know Him.

Get your own spiritual, emotional and physical house in order, and you will be able to help others. If you need help in learning how to budget differently, shop or cook differently, drive differently then seek or ask for that help. If you have skills that can help others, make it known.

Storms are inevitable. But with a mind prepared for action you can live in victory and strength. You may even become a safe “house of refuge” for others in the times of storm.”

Fear happens, but when it occurs, allow it to turn your heart to Him who is in control of all things. Make Him bigger. He is able to handle our concerns and meet our needs, for that be thankful and grateful. Choose to see this time as an adventure, watching to see how God will be God for you, your family and those around you. He is trustworthy!

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!

The Godly Gossiper

Carl and Sam were at odds with each other. They could not even remember the initial cause of friction...but their hostility had festered through the years. Pastor Fred was deeply concerned, so he prayed that God would use him as a peacemaker. Pastor Fred called on Carl. "What do you think of Sam?" he asked. "He's the sorriest guy in town!" Carl growled. "But," Pastor Fred replied, "you have to admit that he's a hard-working man." "No one can deny that," said Carl. "I've never known a person who worked harder. **The next day** Pastor Fred visited Sam. "Do you know what Carl said about you?" No, but I can imagine his lies," Sam responded angrily. "This may surprise you," said Pastor Fred, "but he said he's never known a harder worker." "He said that?" Sam was stunned. "By the way, what do you think of Carl?" Pastor Fred asked Sam. It is no secret that I have absolutely no use for him." Sam replied slowly. "But you must admit he's honest in business," said Pastor Fred. "There's no getting around that," said Sam grudgingly. "In business he's a man you can trust." **The next day** Pastor Fred met Carl again. "Do you know what Sam said about you? He claims you're absolutely trustworthy in business, that you are scrupulously honest." "Well, how 'bout that," reacted Carl with a smile. Soon the *gossipy* Pastor noticed Sam and Carl would cautiously nod to each other in a friendly sort of way. Before long they were shaking hands, talking, even visiting in each other's homes. Today they are best of friends. Many people, even church folk, seem to delight in promoting a fight by carrying news of ill-will. Learn a lesson from Pastor Fred's tactic of *positive-gossip*. Let your *gossip* be to spread words of praise and healing. **THAT's** the only gossip that's worthy of a Christian.



Leadership Encouragement

Conflict Resolution: A Necessary Leadership Skill

In my perfect fantasy world, everyone gets a long. Nobody fights. Everyone understands. However, in real life even God knew there would be conflicts. *Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that war within you. James 4:1*

He gives us strong admonition on how to handle them when they arise. A simple shift from the “if” to “when” of conflict can go a long way to helping us prepare ourselves and those we lead to minimize the negative effects of conflict. This is a major key in helping the idealist cope with the “shock” of having conflict in the church. One definition of conflict is: *the mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands.* Merriam-Webster also includes the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction. So in books or theater, it is the part of the plot which adds interest. However, when it comes to real life—it often just leads to heart ache. Conflict seems to take place when we have opposing needs as well as opposing ways to see those needs met.

Every person living together, working together and even worshipping together brings differing sets of perspective. Most often each individual concludes their personal set of perspectives is the *RIGHT* perspective. And depending on how “right” they feel them to be, people work hard to defend them.

How can leaders use their influence to minimize the negative fallout conflict can bring?

Understand your own conflict resolution style.

- a. Are you competitive? If so, the issue is the main deal. What people think about you doesn’t really matter.
- b. Are you collaborative? Do you try to

meet the needs of all involved?

c. Are you a compromiser? Trying to give everyone a little bit of what they want, while expecting them to give up something as well?

d. Are you accommodating? Do you give in or pay the main price to make peace or settle the conflict?

e. Are you avoiding? Do you try to evade the conflict, hoping someone else will bring solution, or that it will just go away?

Each of these approaches has merits as well as weaknesses. Most of the time a combination of approaches works best, with every situation needing to be treated as unique. In a crisis situation, a competitive leader who can make an astute quick decision is often the quickest way to resolution. At other times, the head leader might use avoidance to allow the subordinates to work out their own issues. It takes wisdom, grace and courage to jump in the middle of a fray—it is so much wiser to intervene when things are at the beginning stages. Each of these skills can be learned.

Knowing that there are differing approaches to conflict resolution opens up different ways to help bring solution. The role of leadership brings two types of conflict resolution needs. One is mediation between those you are leading. The other is resolving personal issues between those you lead and yourself.

One of the tools I apply when approaching a potential conflict or a situation that needs solution is to try and separate the person from the problem. To do this, I rehearse in my mind the positive strengths and qualities that drew me to this person in the first place. I concentrate on forgiving the person, as well as try to figure out through prayer and examination what is the Real Problem. Taking the time to reduce the conflict to its real issue often reveals a simple solution or uncovers the fact that there wasn’t even a problem in the first

place! Personally I used to be a big fan of “avoidance”, but as I have matured in the Lord I know that watching conflicts truly become resolved (not just stuffed away) can actually lead to greater understanding and make the team stronger, not weaker. Addressing conflict is like anything else. It must be done in faith and love. The leader must pray until he/she finds a place of peace in which to proceed. When a group knows that difficulties will be addressed in a biblical manner it adds stability as well as trust. Ephesians 4: 25-27 entreats us:

So you must stop telling lies. Tell each other the truth, because we all belong to each other in the same body. When you are angry, do not sin, and be sure to stop being angry before the end of the day. Do not give the devil a way to defeat you. Learning to be honest that there are difficulties, facing the truth with our neighbor and still allowing the love of God to cover those differences will bring glory to Him. There are so many people in the body of Christ who need to learn what to do with their anger. They need to learn how to process it without hurting those around them. We must truly, become His peacemakers and allow His love to cover a multitude of sin and fault. We can increase in our ability to solve conflicts with a positive result. It does take work, but it will be more than worth it.



Building Together Across Generations

Legacy

Right before Mother's Day I was given the privilege to speak at a Mother/Daughter Tea at Living Faith Christian Fellowship in Oak Harbor, WA. Pastor Linda Jenkins told me the theme was "Legacy". The word "legacy" had been reverberating in my spirit for weeks before then, and I knew that I needed to share with their women.

A legal will is used to determine the allocation of material acquisitions. Yet this is only part of leaving a legacy. In preparing for my sharing at Living Faith, I asked our son, Andrew, what he thought legacy was. His answer, "Mom, everyone leaves a legacy—it is the matter of are you leaving the legacy of your choice? Or is it by default?"

A true legacy is a combination of emotional and financial elements including family traditions, history, the sharing of stories, values and wishes. Every family has its strengths and weaknesses. In examining legacy we find that as usual it is more "caught" than taught! Teaching is important, but our example backs up every teaching that we do. Psalm 78:1-7 declares:

O my people, listen to my teaching, open your ears to what I am saying,

For I will speak to you in a parable.

I will teach you hidden lessons from our past---stories we have heard and know,

Stories our ancestors handed down to us.

We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord.

We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did. For he issued his decree to Jacob; he gave his law to Israel.

He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—that they in turn might teach their children.

So each generation can set its hope anew on God, remembering his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.

Thus they will not be like their ancestors—stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful refusing to give their hearts to God.

I began to think about what important legacy's I want my children and grandchildren to have from my life. Here is that list. I encourage you to sit down and write your own list.

1. I want them to know that I loved the Lord and that I never have regretted obeying His voice. As ministers we have had to "pay a price", but the cost has always been worth it. It is one of the truths I stand on.
2. I want them to know that walking with the Lord and in His ways is the best way to live their life. I must be an example of the believer. I must allow Christ to be formed in me in order for them to see Him through me.
3. I want them to know my testimony of His faithfulness and reality in my life. I must make the time to tell them these stories.
4. I want them to know that through prayer we have access to Him during times of blessing as well as during times of trouble. How and what I talk to God about teaches them how real He is to me.
5. I want them to know that God longs to be brought into the every day real world. Through my example in sharing answers to prayers will help them form an understanding of how He cares for us.
6. I want them to receive God's legacy for them for example: Jesus left us a legacy of Peace. I want them to understand how to access this peace, and it can only happen as I actually walk it out, not just talk about it. I must learn to access it myself!
7. I want them to learn how to solve problems from a Christian world view. Isaiah 54:17 declares "No weapon formed against you shall prosper...this is the heritage of the Children of the Lord". I want them to understand that we have authority as a believer to deal with difficulties and be an over comer. I must walk in that example.
8. I want them to learn how to enjoy life. I do enjoy my life—but I also realize that I have not perfected this area. There is so many wonderful ways to enjoy God's creation and the life He has given us. I am still learning how abundant the abundant life is!
9. I want them to know I wasn't perfect, but I strove to move toward His excellent way. They must know that I confess and repent of my sin and shortcomings and that there is forgiveness and a corresponding liberty when I do.
10. I want them to know the Bible is full of life, wisdom and is the foundation to build your life upon. I must share it with them in a way that they know it is life giving, not life demanding. It is not a chore to read the Bible daily, but a life giving habit that more than repays the time it takes.
11. I want them to know the grace and mercy of God. I will be careful to walk in the grace and mercy myself.
12. I want them to know that His body is full of wonderful people. I will speak well of those in His household and again, be an example of the believer.

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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