



REAL WOMEN!

Dealing With Doubt

R. E. A. L.
Women!
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The last issue of Real Women encouraged a time of “spring cleaning” in our heart. It revealed that taking the time to deep clean those recesses of our heart, (those areas where in the busyness of life, seeds of resentment, hurt, or disappointments have a tendency to accumulate) allows space for good seeds to grow.

In the natural, if we clean as we go, the result is much less dirt over all. Spring cleaning becomes less of an ordeal because the house has been maintained all year long. Apply that same philosophy to the spiritual cleaning of the heart. An ounce of prevention will save us not only time, but also heartache. The weed seeds of doubt, resentment, un-forgiveness, and the like will not be allowed to gather or germinate in the first place, because each is dealt with as it appears.

This goal of cleaning as we go, especially during complicated seasons of life, is much easier said than done, for life can be busy and difficult. But if we stay focused we can recognize and combat one of the biggest weeds: that of doubt.

In our travels, we have come across so many people dealing with diverse, difficult trials; such as sickness, tough family issues, church conflicts, financial tests and disappointments when life does not turn out as expected. People in the Bible also faced such trials. Psalm

107 details some fairly typical life struggles. These descriptions of people include those who were lost and confused, walking in the wilderness (vv. 4-9), those that were captive (vv. 10-16), those that were ill, (vv.17-22), and the common plight of sailors (vv.23-32). In each case, the writer declares the difficulties and then discusses how the people cried unto the Lord and He delivered them out of their troubles and doubts.

As I am writing these brief descriptions they sound so mundane. However, if I were describing *my* time in the wilderness, *my* captivity, *my* season of illness or *my* trip on a tempestuous ship, the emotions and realities of each difficulty would take on a completely different tone. It is in the midst of our *personal* difficulties or challenges (or those closes to us) that we come face to face with our ability or lack thereof to “give thanks to the Lord, for He is good”. Why? Inward reasoning and questionings begin a flurry of mental activity. We are drawn away from what we know is truth and like termites eating away at our foundation, we begin to wonder what we are standing on.

It is during our times of difficulty that we face the challenge to either believe we serve a “good” God, or fall into despair: fearing that God may not be as good as we

hoped. Questions like, “If He truly is ‘good’ would He allow me to go through such trials?” and other types of doubt begin to assail our minds and emotions during such episodes.

Our “spiritual” man says “Yes, God is good.” Our natural man may rise up and say, “Are you sure?” Scripture declares God is good. Satan and our natural mind work against our knowledge of that truth. In other words, whenever doubts creep in, faith begins to seep out. God’s personality and character, and therefore His ability to move in our life are under siege.

Doubt is subtle and sneaky. This subtleness will begin to work its deception unless we are on our guard. We will find ourselves living by doubt, rather than faith, if we are not watchful. When we believe God and act on that belief all is well. Our faith is engaged and we move ahead.

Many times it is in the very act of choosing to move ahead, that doubtful questions begin to occur. These questions authored by Satan, or our own natural mind, begin to challenge our confidence. Doubt, in its very nature, casts suspicion. Satan works to cause us not to trust in God’s nature. He aims to cause us to feel unconvinced or uncertain about where we have placed our faith. He works to cause our



Deal With Doubt Quickly

(Continued from page 1)

mind to suspect that God's ways are not true, that we are in fact, stupid, silly and wrong to put our trust in the Lord. Going back to our examples found in Psalm 107, we find that while the Israelites left Egypt in faith, doubts began to arise at each point of difficulty as when they were confronted by the Red Sea and Pharaoh's chase. Questions began to arise. Fear joined the questions and many of them wanted to return to bondage.

Examine your thoughts. How many times do you succumb to "innocent" but deadly questioning? Are you really sure God is leading you that way? (Doubt) How can it possibly work out? (Doubt). Do you really think God heals today? (Doubt) Why should you receive that answer to prayer? (Doubt) Did God really forgive you? (Doubt)

These seeds of doubt are usually quite small at the beginning. Ignored they can take root and grow and infiltrate every part of our life, until we discard our faith and walk in unbelief. This is very serious. Just this very week we met a father asking us to pray for his son because he had fallen prey to these doubts, and has effectively "lost his faith"..

So how do we combat doubt?

1. Understand that every be-

liever is vulnerable to seeds of doubt. That means you.

2. Magnify the Lord. Make Him large in your sight. Since the beginning of doubt is suspicion and questioning, understand who our God is. The serpent planted doubt of God's goodness in Adam's mind, and he continues with us today.

3. Doubt attacks your mind, so we must guard our thoughts.

4. Expose your doubts. Confess them to those whom you trust in the Lord..

5. When questioning (doubting) comes, take the time to examine their root. Vague uncertainties and thinking that takes you around in circles are not from God. Reject thoughts that are not clear.

6. Determine to grow in your knowledge of the Truth. Just as bank tellers study real currency to spot counterfeit, so as we grow in the knowledge of His Word and our relationship with Him, we will more easily catch the early seeds of doubt.

7. Growth in faith will repel doubts. There will be no place for them to take root. Exercise your faith.

8. Do not let condemnation assault you when you discover a doubtful heart. Repent and move on. Peter didn't quit, even after he needed Jesus to rescue him from the waves,

when doubt almost caused him to drown. Matthew 14:31

9. Allow the Holy Spirit to point out strongholds of doubt in your life. Ask Him to break them down and remove them from you. Matthew 14:31, Luke 24:38

10. Fix your eyes on God. Doubt attempts to draw our focus away from God and onto ourselves, others or our circumstances. When God is our focus, we cannot forget who He is.

11. Cultivate a heart of thankfulness to the Lord, for He truly is **good**. In taking the time to be thankful for what He has done, we will be looking forward to what He will do to fulfill His Word in our lives.

Doubts happen. When they do, do not be afraid, just deal with them. Remember we are called to walk by faith, not by doubt. Overcoming doubt will cause personal growth, bring more fruitfulness and strengthen others in their faith.

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!

Prophetic Word taken from Elijah List: **Small Straws In A Soft Wind by Marsha Burns**

"I speak to those who have been laid bare and are wide open. Your level of vulnerability has been frightening at best, but now is the time for healing and building up. (**Ecclesiastes 3:3**) I will hide you in the cleft of the Rock and cover you there with My hand. I will conceal you from those the enemy would use to pursue you. Predators will continue to be a fact of life, but you will no longer be their prey. You are Mine," says the Lord, "and I will keep you from the teeth of the savage beast."

"You've been almost to hell and back, and you stand amazed that you've made it through the last round of challenges. Did you hear the alarm? Did you get the wake-up call? Rise up in your strong faith and go forth to gain every victory," says the Lord. "I tell you that you are now better equipped to handle whatever life has to throw at you than ever before."

"Just when you thought you were functioning at absolute capacity, doing all that you could possibly do, watch and be amazed. I am about to cause you to do twice as much, and yet with efficiency that will actually reduce your workload. I will show you ways to be more effective in what you've been given to accomplish, but you will need to be flexible and be open to change and new ways of doing things. It is a



Leadership Encouragement

matter of attitude and a willingness to flow.

(Continued from 3)"Beloved, rise up and stir up the gift that is in you. You have laid aside your mantle, as discouragement and disheartenment have caused you to back away from what you have been called to do. The enemy has done his level best to disable you, and he almost succeeded, but now is the time to come back with a vengeance (to an extreme and excessive degree). Make a declaration and determine a decree that you will not sit down, shut up or go back. Activate your will to go forth with great zeal to fulfill your destiny. And, I am with you," says the Lord, "to establish you in Kingdom purpose.

"Truly you are going to increase in almost every area of your life, but this increase will require you to stretch beyond what you ever thought possible. Get ready to experience growing pains. Revelation is a key. When you need understanding all you have to do is ask, and the light will come on. Make that a priority in this process of growth. Ask; seek; knock.

"Watch for and discern opportunities that will facilitate divine objectives. Wait for My leading and then do not be afraid to explore the unexplored, or to develop the undeveloped. You are a people on the cutting edge of My plans and purposes, and I will lead you into higher realms of My manifest glory. Prepare yourselves for an adventure," says the Lord.

ing our children to hear our sincere, genuine praise and thanksgiving to the Lord will communicate to them the importance of this attitude to us, and ultimately for them. The Holy Spirit can help us with this as well. Taking time with our children to rehearse God's goodness, His faithfulness and answers to prayer as we live each day will set an example and plant seeds in their hearts. Allowing them to pray from their heart—even if they spend time thanking God for their doll or bike, (no snickers allowed) will begin to train them in this wonderful attribute. Teach them to thank the Lord for their siblings.

Don't give up. Taking the time to teach our children to be thankful adds much value to their lives. Helping our children develop a sincere grateful heart prepares them to have an easier time of socialization. They will find it easier to make and keep friends, get along with their teachers and other adults. Plus think of all the benefits to their hearts!

Don't have any children of your own? You are still an example to these young ones. Remember it takes a village to raise a child.

The goal of thankfulness is help us look to God and others. It is to help remind us that life is not all about us. Developing a grateful heart is pleasing and glorifying to the Lord. It is well worth the effort, for us as well as our children. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good!*

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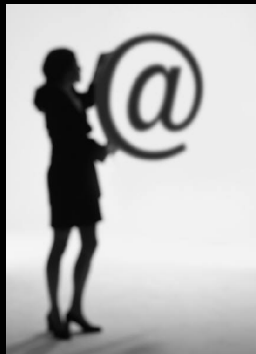
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Building Together Across Generations

Gratitude Pays Dividends

Gratitude, something we all like to receive. It is something we would agree needs to be active in our hearts (especially if we want to be in agreement with the Word!). But, is it something that those that know us, would describe as one of our attributes? Celebrating Thanksgiving once a year is just a beginning. God instructs us to be thankful, not only because it brings honor to Him, but because it is actually beneficial to the “thank-ee”.

It has been scientifically tested and proven that cultivating positive emotions such as appreciation and gratitude can improve the heart's rhythmic functioning say Rollin McCraty of the HeartMath Research Center and Doc Childre of Quantum Intec Inc. It actually helps our health!

Thankful hearts are faith-hearts. People want to be around people who are grateful so it adds benefits to family life, job relationships and especially helps communicate the gospel more easily. Grateful people have a sense of appreciation for what they do have, and therefore are not as easily susceptible to emotions of disappointment, regret and frustration. They are generally happier people and have a tendency to maintain good friendships.

Unfortunately, thankfulness is not part of our natural nature. Selfishness is! Someone said that gratitude is the weakest of all emotions. We do not stay grateful for long, because that makes us indebted, and our natural man does not like to feel indebted to anyone. Gratitude is acknowledging that someone did something for me that I could not do for myself...and so it reveals our vulnerability and dependence on others.

As parents we want to see the benefits of a grateful heart firmly rooted in our family. So, how do we help cultivate this type of heart in our children?

Lead by example: First of all, we must develop and demonstrate a grateful heart ourselves. Children who are treated with respect are given an example of thankfulness and have these seeds planted into their hearts. Adults who expect children to be grateful, but do not give respect to children may receive a forced thank you, but they do not plant seeds of thanksgiving instead seeds of resentment take root. Taking time to thank the store clerk, your spouse, or a child's teacher will reinforce any formal teaching on thankfulness. Ask your child to take out the garbage then thank him for his effort or his obedience and it will add a tone of gratitude in your home. Catch them being thankful and give a positive comment on how that you noticed and the effect on the person they were thankful to. Does a little child run to your arms thanking you for a special gift? Respond immediately with affirmation and acknowledgement.

Take advantage of teachable moments: Deuteronomy 19:11 instructs: *You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up* Taking advantage of opportune teaching moments is the best way to impart into our children any life lesson.

At mealtime: Ask your children to pray for the meal and include something they were especially thankful for that day. Listen for ways to turn criticism and complaints to gratitude. (I am sorry your teacher didn't call on you, but I am thankful you knew the answer).

At bedtime: casually asking what they were thankful for, not only brings it to their attention, but it may reveal how they think and things they care about.

Let them be themselves and develop their own style. Although every child needs to learn to express appreciation verbally, not all find it their most comfortable expression. They may choose to hug or draw a picture or card. Receive their style of appreciation, even if it is different than yours. Teenagers also may go through a difficult period of verbally expressing appreciation. Small reminders may be useful. You may catch it in their eyes, or a quick hug. Don't diminish those expressions. It's the sincerity that matters. Look for their heart.

Teach them to be thankful to the Lord, and for the Lord. We desire for our children to have an attitude of appreciation to God, and for God. Again, modeling is the best way to pass this on. Allow

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