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"Fruits of Restoration"

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Key Verse:

Hosea 10:12, "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until He comes and showers righteousness on you." (NIV)

Devotion:

Believe it or not, I have found this verse to be the key to unlocking the secret to living the life God has given you...and loving it whether you are rejoicing in the sunny good times or feeling tossed and turned in a violent storm. "Why," do you ask? Well, do you remember the story of the uncompromising neighbor who barricaded our driveway in an effort to get a small portion of her property back (which we mistakenly built a road on thinking it was ours; see yesterday's daily devotion "Roadblocks of Life")? The rest of the story goes something like this:

We had to have the pond drained down and it broke our hearts to see it get to such a sad state. We also had to have our driveway moved which was very expensive as well. Did God change our circumstances even though we begged him to? No. Did my heavenly prompting to take my fence-building adversary a glass of water give her a change of heart about the way she was treating us? No.

Unfortunately, the situation never changed. But after walking through the difficulty and anger of that trial, God brought about one of the most beautiful restorations I have ever seen. Not only did He provide every penny we needed to move the driveway (in the most surprising ways, might I add), but now you can't even see evidences of the great driveway escapade. The barren ground sprouted grass again and the driveway sits securely on our own land now. But the most amazing restoration occurred with our pond.

It had taken years to fill our pond so we assumed it would take years to refill it after having it drained. But God had a different plan. Do you remember what He asked me to give my neighbor? One cup of water. Do you know what God gave me back? He brought a rainstorm right over our pond that caused the heaviest downpour I'd ever seen and refilled that pond in one day! My friends, those were not just raindrops that fell that day. To me, it was God lavishing His love all around me and reminding me, He is in absolute control. From one required cup of water to the blessings of millions of gallons.

Even during those moments of intense hardships with others, give your heart permission to grow in the ground of making right choices that honor God every step of the way. Making those right choices leads to living righteously, and living

righteously leads to Holiness. And do you know what Holiness means? It means that we dwell in the presence of God. And in the presence of God, there is freedom and peace even in the midst of tough circumstances. And in time, He will restore what has been taken from you in His perfect way.

My prayer for today:

Heavenly Father, may we never be afraid to step out in faith and in right living, even when it is uncomfortable. Help us to realize that in doing these things we have opportunities to plant seeds for You and bring You glory. We desire this to be our first priority as Christians, and believe that you will honor our obedience even though we may not see it at the time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Re-read Hosea 10:12 and consider some of the following thoughts on each part of the verse:

- 1) "Sow for yourselves righteousness" - Make right choices that honor God even when you don't feel like it.
- 2) "Reap the fruit of unfailing love" - Love for the lovely and unlovely alike.
- 3) "Break up your unplowed ground" - Whether they be blockades in your driveway or blockades in your heart.
- 4) "For it's time to seek the Lord" - Embrace Him with all your heart.
- 5) "Until He comes" - And He most certainly will.
- 6) "And showers righteousness on you" - More than you can ever hope or imagine!

Reflection Points:

Every day, God invites us to reach out in His name to the poor and needy. These people aren't just the financially poor. They are poor in spirit, poor in resources, poor in perspective. For me, it was bringing cold water to the person who was trying to block me from entering my home. Many times, these needy people aren't looking for money or hand-outs; they are looking for encouragement, kindness, and hope. Many of them don't deserve it and will probably not appreciate it. When I offered water to my neighbor, she refused it. But God showed me that just my willingness to offer it was enough for Him to accomplish His purposes in that time and place. Consider where you can be a blessing to someone else and allow God to accomplish His purposes through your obedience to Him.

Power Verses:

Matthew 25:40, "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (NIV)

Hebrews 6:10, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." (NIV)

Philippians 2:14-16, "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." (NIV)

Isaiah 61:3d-4, "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations." (NIV)

Additional Resources:

Radically Obedient, Radically Blessed by Lysa TerKeurst

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_radicallyObedient.htm

Becoming a Woman Who Listens to God, by Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_becomingAWoman.htm

P31 Woman Magazine

<http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/subscription.htm>