

June 28, 2006

Encouragement for Today

“Be Still and Know”

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Key Verse:

Psalm 46:10a, “Cease striving and know that I am God.” (NASB)

Devotion:

I find it hard to accept the fact that relaxing and reveling in life by simply resting and being still is an acceptable activity. What about you? Do you easily take time out from your busy schedule to sit before the Lord, ask Him to speak, enjoy the works of His hands, rest in Him, and delight in the blessings He has so generously poured on you? If you are like so many busy women today, carving out time to sit quietly or romp around seizing the day is not a priority.

Early in the spring, I stepped out into my yard to clear out what the last frost of the fall had destroyed. Working in flower beds, around bushes, by the fence, and next to my front porch I cleared, pruned, and tidied. I brought out the bird baths and scrubbed them down. Then I returned my concrete pieces of yard art to their specified places, filled with water. I did the same with bird feeders, filling them with thistle seed, sunflower kernels, safflower, and wild bird mixture. I ended my day by planting a few of the latest selections from my favorite garden center, and digging up and separating various grasses and lilies. When I finished, I slowly straightened my bent over body, working the stiffness from my wintered joints. There I stood in my back yard. Slowly I turned and surveyed my work. It looked good and I was pleased.

Going inside, I poured myself a glass of lemonade and returned to the fresh air of the outdoors. My favorite lawn chair beckoned so I kicked off my shoes, threw my legs up on the cushions, and put my head back to enjoy the little world I had developed.

It dawned on me that just as God had declared that His work was good, so I had found delight in my creative work. I liked the appearance of my surroundings. God rested after His work in Eden. I certainly was enjoying my brief moment, but in less than 5 minutes my body rebelled! I found, that no matter how I longed to commune with the One Who had brought me to this garden, I could not nail myself to the chaise on which I was relaxing. Finishing my refreshing drink, I stood up, stretched and moved on.

The following morning, even before the earliest rays of sunshine penetrated my sleep, I heard the songs of birds. Each little creature had his own song to sing. I heard sharp chirps and melodious whistles. One little bird sat on a branch outside my window and serenaded me with all he had. After several minutes, his

vigorous voice drew me to the window where I spotted him. As he sang, his little throat pulsed in and out, feathers ruffled, beak wide open, head held high. On and on he sang. This little guy's pitch was perfect. I noticed that the chirpers and the crows were not intimidated, though. They did not stop their singing because there were others in the choir whose voices were more melodious.

While I listened to him and his fellow feathered friends I surveyed the work I had accomplished the previous day. A cardinal sat on a bird feeder. Robins poked around the freshly turned soil. Little wrens flew in and out of my fancy bird house. Blue jays took turns splashing in the bird bath. Clearly the flying fellows in this small lot on planet earth had no trouble basking in the garden where I had spent my time creating and developing a lovely retreat.

I stepped outside to join my 'neighbors' and participate in their praises. As I did so, God reminded me, through my own sense of delight, that it is good to enjoy and savor my Father's provisions. I felt a sense of satisfaction and joy; the birds' obvious pleasure honored and affirmed me.

I sensed God whisper: "Consider the birds of the air. They thrill in the results of your labor and by so doing, they deeply gratify you." "Child," my Father murmured, "gratify me with praise. I created earth for your pleasure. Bask in my presence. Be still and know that I am He who watches and delights while you revel in that which I have created for you."

Next time you feel a tug to sit and rest or a nudge to slow down and savor the world around you, gratify God. Do it! You will honor Him and the work of His hands. He created earth and placed you here to "take delight in the Lord."
(Psalm 37:4)

My Prayer for Today:

My Father, My Creator, Your beauty is reflected here on earth in everything You created. You invite me to experience the garden, knowing I have to slow down in order to do so. Help me accept that quiet time spent with You is a good and healthy activity. Thank you, Lord for the beautiful gift of life and nature. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Read Genesis 1 - 2:21, John 14:1-4, Revelation 21:1-3; 21:9-22:2

In each of these passages God reminds me that He wants to prepare a marvelous place for me. What are the similarities in each of these three scripture readings?

Two of the greatest kings in the Hebrew nation, David and Solomon, wrote beautiful poetry and lengthy praise songs. I learn two things from their writings: 1) They knew God. 2) They didn't mind spending the necessary time needed to

praise him and write about His glory. If they, in the midst of their royal duties, took time to enjoy God and tell Him so, then shouldn't I do the same?

Reflection Points:

Is my life characterized by a constant state of busyness or am I able to enjoy the presence of God on a regular basis?

Is there room in my daily schedule to spend more time with God, so I might learn more about my Father?

Do I want to have a deeper relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Power Verses:

Job 22:26-27, "Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God. You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows." (NIV)

Psalms 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (NIV)

James 4:8a, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." (ESV)

Additional Resources:

Becoming a Woman who Listens to God, by Sharon Jaynes

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

Breathe, by Keri Wyatt Kent

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

What Happens when Women Walk in Faith, by Lysa TerKeurst

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