

October 3, 2006

Encouragement for Today

Principle 1

“The Marks of Love”

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Key Verse:

Isaiah 49:16, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands ...” (NIV)

Devotion:

As a sign of her undying love and faithfulness, a certain celebrity permanently tattooed the name of her beloved on her arm. This act of devotion was “*permanent*” until she and the love of her life broke up. Then the tattoo was promptly removed and another’s name tattooed in its place. So much for everlasting love!

Unfaithfulness abounds. Selfishness defines our society. Relationships are seen as an expendable part of life. The world is littered with broken hearts and shattered relationships left in the wake of deceit and rejection.

When someone we love turns away from us, we’re left wondering how a love that seemed so true, turned into such a lie. Why didn’t we see it coming? Rejection spawns a downward spiral into grief and despair, filled with more lies that we are worthless and unlovable. Once we start believing these lies we set ourselves up for more rejection. It’s a dangerous cycle in which many find themselves.

At the depth of our pain, in the darkest moment of the night, God speaks words of truth into our hearts: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5 NIV).

Though others may forget their promises to us, God will not. To make sure we know He’s serious, God made two eternally permanent marks of His faithful love. First, in Isaiah 49:16 God tells us, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

Get that! We’re not written in a Sharpie marker, not a semi-permanent henna tattoo that washes off in a week, not even a “*permanent*” full color tattoo that can be removed. But God has *engraved* us on His palm. That’s a mark that can’t be erased.

Then, God made His second mark of faithfulness with the blood of Jesus. Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have

been brought near through the blood of Christ.” The cross is our reminder of that love.

Though many may fall around you, you are cherished and loved by the Almighty God. Today He holds your sweet face in His hands, nail scarred hands that are engraved with your name, and reminds you that He chose you and will never leave you.

My Prayer for Today:

Heavenly Father, You are faithful and true. Thank you for never changing and for loving me with an eternal love. Help me to love others with the same type of love. Forgive my selfishness and the times I have not modeled Your love. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Think about someone who has lied to you. Now think about our God who never lies. Worship God for His faithfulness. Offer forgiveness to the one who has lied.

Reflection Points:

What are some common reasons people are unfaithful to others?

Sometimes we believe God has forgotten us. What are some circumstances that can prompt us to think that way?

Read Isaiah 49:14-16. To what or whom does God compare His love?

Sometimes we are the ones who have lied or betrayed another. Has that ever been the case in your life? If so, confess that to the Lord and seek forgiveness from the person you have wronged.

Power Verses:

Psalms 20:7, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” (NIV)

2 Corinthians 1:20, “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.” (NIV)

Joshua 1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (NIV)

Hebrews 10:23, “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we possess, for he who promised is faithful.” (NIV)

Micah 7:7, “But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.” (NAS)

Additional Resources:

What Happens When Women Walk In Faith by Lysa TerKeurst

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

When Your Marriage Dies by Laura Petherbridge

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

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