

# Living in the Channel

Lorelle Ebens



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## Background Story

My name is Lorelle Ebens, wife of Adrian Ebens. We have two sons – Michael and Daniel. Adrian had been a minister in the Seventh-day Adventist church, since his graduation from Avondale College at the end of 1996. In 2006 Adrian became too unwell to continue working, and needed time to heal. During that time, he studied more about the issues surrounding Women's Ordination and that led to the study of the nature of God – was He a trinity? Or was there a Father and Son, with Their Spirit as the third agency by which They bring Their personal presence to us?

The history of Adrian's relationship with the church from that point forward has led to the loss of his ordination as a Minister at the end of 2009. And following that, the loss of his church membership in 2012. These events brought separation from the church of our childhood, separation from many friends – grief, loss and isolation. Along with these relational and emotional challenges, Adrian also was suffering in his health.

Another layer of challenge, very intense at times – the fallout for a family when one member has severe autism. In 2001, our precious 3-year-old boy Daniel, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. After the wondering and searching for answers, it was nice to have a diagnosis. But a diagnosis did nothing to prepare us for the intense challenges of autism, nor give much direction for how to improve his condition. Ever since then, we have spent much time and money on remedial methods and therapies – some bad, some downright ugly, some good and some fantastic.

Since 2007, we have moved house a number of times, trying to find a location / climate that might suit our health best. During 2009 and 2010 we picked up some parasites that added significantly to our health challenges and Daniel's behavioural issues. It took us until October/November of 2010 before we knew what was wrong and found the treatments required. It took a number more years for our health to rebuild.

During these challenging years, there was much stress, anxiety, and yes depression. There were many lessons in learning to trust God when life was hard and the trials severe. There was also much learning about God and His Son, Their character, the Divine Pattern of relationships, and how this all applies in our family structure.

It was during some of the severest trials of this time that I began to write this series of articles. I was seeking to come to grips with the intensity of the struggles we were facing. Many days, it felt overwhelming. These articles are like songs in the night, following my husband into a theological storm while our health was descending into a fight for mere survival. There were plenty of tears, a number of questions, and a few times anger at the path I have walked. The temptation to self-pity and resentment came plenty of times, but Jesus helped us through it all for which I am very thankful.

During 2013 to 2016 we moved house yet again a number of times, and Adrian travelled for periods of time overseas. While it was wonderful for Adrian to meet in person with and minister to many people who were coming to the same beliefs all around the world, it did mean periods of time separated as a family. This brings its own set of challenges. However, it was an important zone where the boys needed stability for their schooling, so it was a sacrifice we had to make.

Another learning curve came regarding the Sabbath Fountain of Feast-keeping, and in 2015 and 2016 we had our first camp meetings / feasts here in Australia. This area of our search for truth did bring more separation and isolation sadly. However, the blessings have been wonderful.

This brief background sketch gives a window of insight into our life journey during the time that I wrote these "blogs" on Adrian's website: *Maranathamedia.com*. A number of requests had been made for me to put these "blogs" into a booklet, so here it is.

It is now 2023! Years have passed since 2016 when I wrote the last of these "blogs", with more blessings and more challenges. I am not sure the reasons why I have not written any more since October 2016. Maybe too busy with

our life of ministry and Daniel's autism; maybe interaction online with social medial platforms have taken over the means of communicating with our group worldwide. Anyway, here is what I had written from 2010 to 2016, so come with me on some of my spiritual growth journey through those years!

## I Love Psalm 34 – Let's Praise God Together

(April 19, 2010)

Psalm 34 is such an encouraging chapter of the Bible. Let us praise God together today, for His deliverance, the hope He gives us and for His wonderful promises.

I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth....O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. (verse 1,3)

There are so many beautiful promises in this psalm.

This psalm has been a comfort to me when I've been upset, when I've been afraid, when I've been under lots of pressure, when the weight of trials seemed too heavy to bear.

Here are some of the beautiful encouragements in this Psalm that I have claimed when in hard times emotionally:

I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. (v4)

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles. (v6)

The Angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. (v7)

The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry. (v15)

*The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. (v17)*

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. (v19)*

May we all be encouraged today, that our Heavenly Father and His Son are looking upon us with enormous love, and have weighed every trial we are to face today, and have determined that if we hold onto their outstretched Hand by faith, we can come through these trials triumphantly and They will bring out the gems They have placed amongst the dross in our characters.

Have a blessed day, full of praise for Our God.

## Nothing Too Small

(May 09, 2010)

Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. (*Steps to Christ*, page 100)

"Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice."

We had evidence of this during the last week. We needed to replace our fridge (that kept freezing everything). We looked on ebay, and the exact fridge we were looking for was listed, and it was within driving distance to pick up. It was only 2 years old, but listed with a starting bid more than \$100 less than half the price of a new one. This one must be for us. We wanted to



do our bidding in the last minutes to get a good deal. The auction process was to finish about half an hour after sunset Sabbath night.

After a lovely Sabbath rest, we were happily doing things in the kitchen, when Adrian suddenly had a thought.."oh, the fridge on ebay". I quickly went to the computer and pulled up ebay – it had 4 minutes to go on the auction. We put our bid in and had no challenge to it – so we were able to purchase the fridge for less than half price of a new one!!

Praise God – we were so happy after the Sabbath, that had completely forgotten about the fridge and by the time we would have remembered it would have been too late. But God had not forgotten, it was not too small a matter for Him to notice – so He reminded us.

Praise Him for the evidence of His love and watchcare over us.

## Infinite Love Ordered the Experiences that Seemed Most Trying

(May 15, 2010)

Everyone goes through trials – I used to look around at others and think my life harder than other people – but I have come to the conclusion that everyone goes through trials that are hard to bear. Some people's trials are more visible, and they are out in the open, for all to see, so they can be talked about (e.g. health issues, car accidents, caring for disabled family members, broken families, death of loved ones). But other people who appear to "have life so easy" may have very secret and hidden trials, that are too private to be talked about (e.g. health issues, abusive relationships, sexual assaults, learning difficulties, phobias, grief and loss – e.g. loss of babies/miscarriage, infertility etc).

No trials are easy – all of them bring physical and emotional stress.

Our family has had a fair share of stress due to Adrian's health condition and our son Daniel's fairly severe autism. I personally have lost so much sleep

due to Daniel's disordered sleep patterns over his short 11 years of life. If sleep was a part of the recovery process in heaven or the new earth, I might need to sleep for a year non-stop to catch up!! Thankfully all that will be forgotten!

There have been times when life has just seemed too hard – the stress level too high – when I don't think I can keep going. Just 2 months ago, while in Melbourne (1000km away from home) for some therapy for Daniel, I came to a point where I thought that if life continued on as it was, I just was not going to be able to cope. He has been struggling biochemically over the last 12 months, with progressively worsening aggressive/violent outbursts.

The Lord led me to a decision. It was my birthday, and after only getting to sleep at 11.30pm, the day started too early (at 3am!) with Daniel's screams. He wasn't coping with the pain in his head again. "Well happy birthday" I said to myself!! *But I decided that even if life did not get better, I needed to learn to trust God no matter what.* And I decided that it would be a good day that day. I decided to trust that one day I will understand why life has to be so hard. Well God is good; I did have a lovely day (including a surprise birthday lunch with friends). After another week of extremely difficult times with Daniel, God has allowed it to get a bit easier, and we are getting a few clues to his biochemical problems.

Recently I came across these beautiful words from the last chapter of Volume 9 of the Testimonies:

...All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall **know** that ***infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying.*** As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. {9T 286.2}

It will be a wonderful time – to be able to praise God for His infinite love that has “ordered” all the trials we have, and to rejoice with joy unspeakable.

From my viewpoint here on earth – especially when I am in the midst of trials, I find it hard to imagine how that can be possible. But **it will** come to pass, as it was revealed to the prophet.

My greatest need in trials, is the need for **absolute trust in God**. My great weakness has been murmuring, complaining about my lot (in good company with the Israelites in the wilderness!!) and harbouring resentment against God, resisting the path He has chosen to lead me on to purify my character.

More words of instruction from 9T:

**Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons**, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts... {9T 286.4}

... Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King... {9T 287.1}

... It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And **in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness... Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase**. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” James 5:7, 8. {9T 287.2, 288.1}

# When He Comes, Will He Find Faith on the Earth?

(May 24, 2010)

I was thinking about the position that the Son of God is in – a submissive role to the Father, the conduit or channel through which all of God’s love, life, blessings, creative power etc. flow to the rest of the universe. The Son receives all from the Father; everything originates from the Father, who is the Source of everything.

Our natural human way of thinking cringes at the thought, that the Son is a channel, that nothing originates from Him, He receives all from the Father. The “lie of the serpent” lurking within us makes us recoil from this concept – it makes us feel that if you have nothing originating from yourself, you are a nobody – just a reflector of someone else. We would prefer to see something coming from the Son, we don’t want Him to be a reflector of someone else. We would take part in the same spirit as Peter and rebuke our Lord:

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. (Matthew 16:22)

And Jesus would rebuke us, as He did Peter:

But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. (Mark 8:33)

When I see things inside myself that recoils from the submissive channel position of the Son of God; when I see things inside myself that shows unbelief in the truth, because my human nature rejects the ideas – and I realise how deeply rooted is the “lie of the serpent” that there must be power from within us for us to feel valuable – I fear. “Oh ye of little faith.”

...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Praise God that He is showing us what lies within our hearts now, while there is still probationary time to allow Him to wash us clean and root out the evil that lurks deep within our hearts.

I want to grow in faith – so that there will be Faith on the earth when Jesus comes again!!

## How Clear is This?

(May 31, 2010)

I have so enjoyed reading Gary Hullquist's Theos magazines! Reading No.5 at the moment, "The Struggle Over Spirit".

Two E. G. White quotes, Gary quoted, when put together – make it so clear:

There is **but one** power that can break the hold of evil from the hearts of men, and that is **the power of God in Jesus Christ. Only through the blood** of the Crucified One is there cleansing from sin. His grace alone can enable us to resist and subdue the tendencies of our fallen nature. {8T 291} (1904)

Sin could be resisted and overcome **only** through the mighty **agency of the Third Person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. (*Desire of Ages*, page 671) (1898)

Put these two quotes together and it is so clear that the Holy Spirit / Holy Ghost / Third Person of the Godhead, is "the power of God in Jesus Christ" – it is the combined spirit / power / mind of God and His Son.

I also like the quote:

Christ tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and the Comforter is the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth, which the Father shall send in My name." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him

not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" [John 14:16, 17]. **This refers to the omnipresence of the Spirit of Christ, called the Comforter.** 14MR p.179 (Letter 7, 6 November 1891)

Is that clear or is that clear?

## Before I Called, He Answered!

(June 5, 2010)

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

Driving home from shopping 2 days ago, in our 4WD LandCruiser, I was pulled over by the police for a random breath test – no problem there. The officers have a quick look over the vehicle as well – no flat tyres or other problems obvious! On my way again!

A few minutes later, along a country road, I thought the road seemed a bit bumpy. Then I realised it was not the road, but my wheel. I spotted a safe place to pull over, when there was the sound of a loud explosion – and yes it came from one of my back tyres! A bit scary! And yes, the usual female reaction is to scream! (Thankfully this safe spot was opposite a house).

On inspection – the back tyre was shredded. Now what to do. With my 11-year-old autistic son in the passenger seat screaming and crying. (He doesn't cope too well when things don't go the way they should! He would stop screaming if I would just hop back in and we drive on home. But sorry that was not possible.) And I really did need help to jack the vehicle up, change the wheel over. I don't think I could do that by myself.

I rang Adrian, to see if our NRMA (road-side assist) membership covered this vehicle – but no we only got the cover for our car! But I was not in the car, that was with Adrian in a different state – about 800km / 500 miles north!

The possibility of leaving the vehicle and walking to the next town to get help, with my son screaming all the way, would have been 'one bad half hour.'

I didn't have to wait long for an answer – I hadn't even yet prayed for God to help me – and I was still on the phone to Adrian – when a man came from the house nearby asking if I needed help. His daughter had been in the front yard, and had been startled by the explosion.

The man brought over a hydraulic jack, and without too much trouble had the spare wheel on for me. His daughter said she wanted to be a "Special Education teacher". With Daniel's screaming all the while, I asked her: "This doesn't change your mind?" She was not phased – she said she loved these kids.

How good is God – providing help straight away, and with people that had a heart of love for kids with special needs.

When I was thanking the man, there was the sound of thunder from an approaching storm but God gave a beautiful rainbow, as if a thank-you to the man for me. Only minutes after we started up again it was teeming with rain. God's timing is good!

Praise God for His love and mercy!

## Was Roger An Angel?

(June 12, 2010)

I'm not sure. I met him on a train.

About 6 months ago, I was waiting on a train station with my 11-year-old son Daniel (who has autism). A terminating train had just been and gone. Daniel began screaming and hitting me. No reasoning about why we did not get on that train could penetrate his brain now that he was in "meltdown." This is not just the tantrum of a toddler wanting their own way. It is the

behavior of one who is struggling to make sense of the world around them. He has perfected the art of using his diaphragm to produce a very loud, high-pitched, ear-piercing, squeal; and he hits his head so hard, you'd think he's going to give himself brain damage; and he recently began hitting us; and throwing anything within reach! Nothing for me to do, but protect property and people until it's over.

A man called out to the lady next to me: "Is that one of your girls making all that noise?" In her defense, I say "No it's my son. He has autism and he's having trouble coping with..." I didn't finish. I thought: *I don't need to explain to you... you wouldn't care anyway... you only care about the fact that you are having trouble concentrating on what you are trying to read... you wouldn't care about the fact that I have to deal with this every day – in public and in private.* The lady said to me, "It's hard on you as the mum, isn't it?" Yes ... I explained a little of the cause of the blow up.

I know there are valid reasons for his "meltdowns" – he doesn't understand that sometimes you need to wait, things change, things move location, things sometimes don't work like they used to, sometimes things get broken. He doesn't understand why he can't have some food item this time that he had when he was there last time. He gets anxious when he doesn't know where he is going, what is going to happen. Sometimes there is too much sensory input and he gets overloaded. And then there is the constant pain/problem he calls "plopping" in his brain and pain in his gut.

I sat there – defending myself against Daniel's blows, until he settled down again. Then my thoughts turned to memories and friends, hopes and disappointments.

Tears welled up, as I thought about some of the other recent places this had happened in public – airports, shopping centres, trains, on family holidays, at various outings – I get used to "all eyes" staring at us, comments made, yells from other people to "shut that kid up."

I thought of my friend whose 5-year-old son has just lost his diagnosis of autism ("totally recovered"). I am happy for them... but it hurts too... we've



been trying everything we could find and afford to help Daniel for the last 8 years...

I thought of all the people we've seen for assessments and therapies (psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavioural management programs, autistic centres, special schools, allergists, paediatricians, biomedical doctors (even expensive specialists from USA), remedial movement therapists... The services needed – respite, medical and communication aides... All the time spent in therapies (at appointments and in home programs) – educational, behavioural, movements, listening therapies, speech therapy... homeschooling (we had to pull him out of school 4 years ago)...

I thought of the daily hours of extra work – mixing of multiple supplements and syringing into his mouth; extra cooking due to special diet needs; extra washing & cleaning (wet beds & poo smearing – bed, carpet, walls, trampoline, pathways, not to mention his hair!); assisting him with self-help skills like a toddler (dressing, bathing, toileting, teeth-cleaning, eating); home therapy programs; use of his communication machine for his homeschooling & more complex conversations...

I thought of all the lack of sleep I've had – sometimes for weeks at a time surviving on 3-5 hours of sleep per night – due to kids that don't sleep well...

I thought of all the house moves we've done – 7 times in the last 3 years – searching for that right location for our family to get the services we need and recover health...

I thought of the money spent (possibly around \$120,000) and all the fundraising I've had to do to raise the money for Daniel's needs (as more than half of the last 10 years, Adrian has been out of paid work due to his own health issues)...

All we have done has helped – most of the money we have spent has been worth it ... But after all this our child has not lost his diagnosis...we are still here – with severe autism – limited speech, obsessive-compulsive

behaviours, limited social understanding, delayed development, and these meltdowns!!!

Our train came, we got on, found the last seat available in the crowded carriage. I sat there, tears welling up in my eyes, too tired to really cry – I'd cried so much before. I wish I had the answers to fix Daniel's problems... but most of all – I'm just so tired of it all. It is all so hard. There are some days I wish this was a job – I don't want to quit or resign, but just call in sick some days and say I can't come to work. But I just have to keep going. It took about 30 minutes to sort out my self-pitying thoughts and reconcile myself to the position God has allowed me to be in.

God has His reasons, why a friend's child can be "totally recovered" but we still struggle along with such difficulty. One day I will understand. I know God says that he will supply all our needs, and nothing that He allows us to go through is too much for us.

Perhaps Daniel is shielded from many temptations that other boys face, as autism allows innocence to much that happens in the world. Daniel has a simplicity to him – he does have a relationship with God, loves to sing Christian songs from his DVDs and loves going to church. He does have a lot of the day that he is very happy – lots of laughter. He is such a polarized character – it's all on or all off – either really happy, or having these screaming sessions.

A short time before our train trip finished, we moved to a seat on the other side of the carriage. An elderly gentleman moved across and asked "Do you mind if I sit here?" He introduced himself as "Roger" and his wife sitting opposite was, I think, "Bernitta". He chatted with me about Daniel and where we live and where they lived. But one of the first things he said to me was: **"You're doing a good job with him."** They might not have been the exact words – but it was certainly words to that effect. Roger and Bernitta got off at the same station as we did – and they went up the lift. We parted ways.

How did Roger know the struggle I had just had in my mind? How did he know my great need for some reassurance about all I was doing with Daniel?

I know my Heavenly Father knew I needed some reassurance. To my delight, I realized – **it was my Heavenly Father speaking to me through this man. My Heavenly Father said to me that He thought I was doing a good job with Daniel, that He was pleased with me!!**

Little did I know how much I needed that reassurance in the next couple of weeks:

When visiting a friend I hadn't seen for 15 or 20 years – who was staying with her Dad in a retirement village where my parents lived – I left Daniel to stay in the car in my parents' driveway – so that he could go into their house when he was ready... I came back to find he'd cracked the windscreen with his foot or water bottle or something!! The price I have to pay to be social – to enjoy a friendship!

When cleaning splattered poo off the bathroom walls and off the trampoline and off the pathway in the yard.

When he is screaming and hitting me and throwing things around the room at 3am because his "plopping" in his head is driving him insane. – and I'm alone because my husband and other son are visiting relatives in another state!

When cleaning up a smashed plate he has thrown across the lounge room – because of his "plopping".

When he's screaming and hitting me because his food is not ready yet (and he has low blood sugar) or his food is too hot to eat yet, so he won't burn his mouth and insides.

When cleaning up wee from the toilet floor practically every time he goes to the toilet – because he still sits on the toilet and misses.

When he is screaming because we go to a new shopping centre and he's not familiar with it.

Roger couldn't have known the emotional struggle I was having – how did he know I needed to hear that? He didn't, but God did – and suggested to

Roger to go say those words to me. Roger listened and became **a channel of blessing from my Heavenly Father.**

Or did Roger know – was Roger an angel? My guardian angel – sent with words of encouragement for me?

I don't know – but I guess it doesn't matter whether Roger was an angel or human – he was still **a channel through which a message was given me, direct from heaven, that God was pleased with me.** And the thought that God thinks I'm doing a good job, carries me through the hard times I'm still having.

## Dealing with Self-Pity and Resentment

(June 13, 2010)

It has been 6 months since meeting "Roger" (see my blog "Was Roger An Angel?"). At that time, God was merciful to me in my trials and sent a message of reassurance that He was pleased with me.

I remember another time back in 2001, just as Daniel was regressing into autism, and Adrian was very sick. I was finding it all a bit hard. I remember going into my bedroom, kneeling down and crying it all out to my Heavenly Father. For a split second I felt an arm around my shoulders, and the quiet assurance that He was not going to take away all the difficulties, but He would be there beside me to walk through them with me. That reassurance carried me a long while.

While I treasure these reassurances of God's love and pleasure, God is now leading me to a deeper understanding of myself and how I handle trials.

Yes, our family has had our fair share of trials – even yesterday – our younger son, with autism, had such a bad headache from the "plopping" he gets that he was screaming, crying, throwing things, hitting for 6 hours before he finally dropped off to sleep for the night. Sleep – what a relief!

**In my head** I have known that God allows difficult times to purify our characters:

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. (James 1:2-3)

And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (Malachi 3:3)

Also, **in my head** I have known that God will give us the power to endure temptations and difficult times:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations (2 Peter 2:9)

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

**But in my heart** I have a great tendency to indulge in “self-pity” when having trials. The Lord has pointed out to me, that underneath the self-pity and behaviours to comfort myself (because of that self-pity), there is lurking something evil. It is the presence of the venom of the serpent, a taste of the lie fed to Eve in the garden.

The serpent wants me to believe that God has not given me a fair deal, God has made my life too hard. I have found myself saying things like: “It’s all too hard,” or “Why does life have to be so hard?” or “How much more of this do I have to take?” or “I can’t take any more of this!” or even “If life has to go on like this, I’d rather not be around anymore.” Am I not questioning God’s wisdom in ordering my life? Am I not believing the serpent’s lie?

As I have entertained these thoughts, I have believed the serpent’s lies about God, and I have become infected with his poison and become diseased with resentment against the way God has led me. This resentment often is

masked, is subconscious, is not obvious. But when the Lord has had me look deep within for reasons for my behaviours, resentment has been found.

So, lurking beneath self-pity and self-comforting behaviours, lies the evil of **resentment** against God. This resentment is really an accusation against God's wisdom, an anger at His ordering of my life. Isn't that the way the whole controversy started with Lucifer in Heaven?

I have asked the Lord to forgive me for my anger at Him, for my resentment about the way He has led in my life. I have asked Him to help me to have the "faith of Jesus" and the "mind of Jesus" that I may choose to trust God's leading and submit to the trials as they happen.

I am asking God to help me to fully trust His promises:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.  
(Romans 8:28)

All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. We shall know that infinite love ordered the experiences that seemed most trying. As we realize the tender care of Him who makes all things work together for our good, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.  
{9T 286.2}

Quoting Gary Hullquist (in a comment to another blog): "Jesus is now my Hero! He's the Captain of our faith. We are not only they who keep the commandments of God, but also have the faith of Jesus, a faith that accepted everything His Father gave him, submitting, resting solely in His care and keeping."

May this be my experience today – and yours too!

# Example of Male Headship in Families in the Old Testament

(June 28, 2010)

Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*. But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity. These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house. (Numbers 30:13-16)

In Numbers 30 Moses was given directions what should happen when people make "vows" or "oaths unto the Lord" to "bind his soul with a bond". If a **man** made such a vow, the vow/oath stood – he had to do what he said. However, if a **woman** made a vow/oath – it stood only if her father (if she was still living in his house) or her husband (if married when she made the vow) allowed it ("held his peace" when he heard her make the vow). If he did not allow it, the father/husband "made it void" and "the Lord shall forgive her". If the woman was not married (divorced or a widow) and the vow was made was not made when she had been married, then the vow stood. If a woman made a vow and her husband disallowed it (but later than the day she made the vow), the Bible says "he shall bear her iniquity."

This is an example of the authority structure that the woman came under – she was under the protection of her father or her husband. I guess he may disallow a vow, if it was not in her best interest.

Just an interesting observation confirming some of the principles we have been learning!

# Are We Trying to Have a Dinner Party on the Battlefield?

(October 9, 2010)

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (Ephesians 6:12)

We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make believe conflict. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and it rests with us to determine which shall win. (*In Heavenly Places*, page 253)

We are so often weary of our trials, wishing life could be more peaceful and easier. But, to have an easy life here, is to miss the opportunity that God gives us to overcome difficulties through prayer to Him for help and faith in His promises. Through our trials God teaches us of the evils that still lurk under the surface in our characters, that must be overcome.

Do not look upon trial as something strange, but as the means by which we are to be purified and strengthened. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," James admonishes; "knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2,3). In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God. (*In Heavenly Places*, page 257)

Our heavenly Father does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. He has His purpose in the whirlwind and in the storm, in the fire and in the flood. The Lord permits calamities to come to His people to save them from greater dangers. He desires everyone to examine his own heart closely and carefully, and then draw near to God, that God may draw near to him... Every soul that is saved must be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings, that he may be a partaker



with Him of His glory. How few understand why God subjects them to trial. It is by the trial of our faith that we gain spiritual strength. The Lord seeks to educate His people to lean wholly upon Him. (*In Heavenly Places*, page 265)

But we want an easy life! We want to enjoy doing what we want to do, to have no trials, to be comfortable.

I have in my mind an image of a war/battle ground with fire flying from one side to the other. And in the middle of the battle ground is this group of people sitting around a table trying to have a dinner party – trying to enjoy the food, the music, the company, the view. They keep getting disturbed by all the noise and annoyance of this battle going on around them – wishing it would go away, wondering why this battle is on, and why it has to keep disturbing their dinner party.

How absurd!! But that is how it is with us in life – we are in the greatest of battles there ever was – the great controversy between good and evil. And we wonder why our attempt to have a peaceful and happy life keeps getting disturbed by trials and problems!!

Am I still trying to have a dinner party in the middle of a battleground?

## We Will Get that Dinner Party! – But Not Now...

(October 16, 2010)

Am I still trying to have my dinner party in the midst of a battle field?...Yes, in subtle ways, every day, I find myself still trying to have an “easy life”, and getting disappointed by the trials that come my way. In my head, I know that trials are for my good – to weed out of my character all the selfishness, resentment and sin that lurks beneath my notice. But the human heart still desires peace and ease!

But there is to be no peaceful and easy life here.

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. Satan lives, and is active, and every day we need to cry earnestly to God for help and strength to resist him. As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome, and there is no stopping place, there is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained... (*God's Amazing Grace*, page 291)

But, while we need to be part of the battle on the battle field (not part of the attempted dinner party), we do not battle alone. When we cry for help, help is given – God's Spirit and angels from heaven. God promises to help us when we call unto Him earnestly; He promises that no temptation shall be too great for us to bear with His help; and that He will supply all our needs.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Philippians 4:13)

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

So, while we may be in a fierce battle, we do not battle alone. We have help right beside us. But we will get that "Dinner Party", when the battle is all over. It will be the best dinner party, with the best music, with the best company, you could ever want:

The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory

of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, "Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you." We shouted, "Alleluia! glory!" and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it. I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit. I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said, "Not now. Those who eat of the fruit of this land go back to earth no more. But in a little while, if faithful, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain." And He said, "You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you." Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things of earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest! (*Early Writings*, page 19-20)

May we all be faithful while on the battle field, so that we can be there for the greatest "Dinner Party" that has ever occurred in the Universe!

## Rights and Privileges

(November 6, 2010)

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

By rebellion and apostasy man **forfeited the favor of God; not his rights, for he could have no value except as it was invested in God's dear Son.** This point must be understood. He forfeited those privileges which God in His mercy presented him as a free gift, a treasure in trust to be used to advance His cause and His glory, to benefit the beings He had made. The moment the workmanship of God refused obedience to the laws of God's kingdom, that moment he became disloyal to the government of God and he made himself

entirely unworthy of all the blessings wherewith God had favored him.

This was the position of the human race after man divorced himself from God by transgression. **Then he was no longer entitled to a breath of air, a ray of sunshine, or a particle of food.** And the reason why man was not annihilated was because God so loved him that He made the gift of His dear Son that He should suffer the penalty of his transgression. Christ proposed to become man's surety and substitute, that man, through matchless grace, should have another trial—a second probation—having the experience of Adam and Eve as a warning not to transgress God's law as they did. And inasmuch as man enjoys the blessings of God in the gift of the sunshine and the gift of food, there must be on the part of man a bowing before God in thankful acknowledgment that all things come of God. Whatever is rendered back to Him is only His own who has given it.

Man broke God's law, and through the Redeemer new and fresh promises were made on a different basis. **All blessings must come through a Mediator.** Now every member of the human family is given wholly into the hands of Christ, and **whatever we possess—whether it is the gift of money, of houses, of lands, of reasoning powers, of physical strength, of intellectual talents**—in this present life, and the blessings of the future life, **are placed in our possession as God's treasures** to be faithfully expended for the benefit of man. Every gift is stamped with the cross and bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ. ***All things come of God. From the smallest benefits up to the largest blessing, all flow through the one Channel—a superhuman mediation sprinkled with the blood that is of value beyond estimate because it was the life of God in His Son.***

Now not a soul can give God anything that is not already His. Bear this in mind: "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14). This must be kept before the people wherever we go—that we possess nothing, can offer nothing in value, in work, in faith, which we have not first received of God and upon

which He can lay His hand any time and say, They are Mine—gifts and blessings and endowments I entrusted to you, not to enrich yourself, but for wise improvement to benefit the world. (*Faith and Works*, page 21-22)

**Rights:** I have often lived as if it is my “right” to have a nice, easy life; to have the time and energy to do things I want to do. With all the difficulties we’ve faced recently with our younger boy, we have been struggling at times to even find the time and energy to the things necessary for running the home (e.g. cleaning, washing, having meals). This has often led me to feel resentment, frustration and anger. But God has been teaching me that it is not my “right” to have the time and energy to do these things.

**Privileges:** Rather than a “right”, God has been teaching me to consider it a “privilege” to have the time and energy to do the things that need doing, or have peace from the trials.

So, then my focus can be positive (thankful, praising God when given the time, energy to do things), rather than negative (being resentful during trials, because of what it stops me from having to time to do, or the experiences I am missing out on). This focus helps me to trust that God allows all our trials for our good – how else could I have learnt these lessons. Sometimes I feel like such a slow learner. But at least I am learning, and being refined in God’s character factory!

## A Beautiful Hymn – Day by Day

(November 23, 2010)

Last Sabbath afternoon, I enjoyed the privilege of some peaceful time to play the piano and reflect on the words of hymns.

This one really spoke to me – hymn 532 “Day by Day”- so I thought I’d share the words with you all.

Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here; Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment, I've no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best. Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, He whose name is Counsellor and power. The protection of His child and treasure Is a charge that on Himself He laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then in every tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith's sweet consolation Offered me within Thy holy Word. Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting, E'er to take, as from a Father's hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.

(I had included links to two YouTube videos of this hymn. These may/may not still be available.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99tSt4XLZV4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY8OrhayhFI>

(Note: Later this Hymn became very special to us as a family. In June 2016 my father, Allan Masters, started having a bit of trouble breathing. It was found that he had a cancer in his lung. He had been an electrician, and worked in buildings with asbestos over the years. After only a 10-week illness, he passed away in August 2016. This hymn was a special comfort to my mother, Jean Masters, in dealing with her grief. This hymn was sung at my father's funeral service.)

## War, War...We Cannot Accept Peace on Such Conditions

(November 23, 2010)

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24.)

In these last days, when iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold, God will have a people to glorify His name, and stand as reprovers of unrighteousness. They are to be a “peculiar people,” who will be true to the law of God when the world shall seek to make void its precepts; and when the converting power of God works through His servants, the hosts of darkness will array themselves in bitter and determined opposition.... **There will be a constant conflict from the time of our determination to serve the God of heaven, until we are delivered out of this present evil world. There is no release from this war....** {AG 333.2}

Our work is an aggressive one, and as faithful soldiers of Jesus, we must bear the blood-stained banner into the very strongholds of the enemy.... **If we will consent to lay down our arms, to lower the blood-stained banner, to become the captives and servants of Satan, we may be released from the conflict and the suffering. But this peace will be gained only at the loss of Christ and heaven. We cannot accept peace on such conditions. Let it be war, war, to the end of earth’s history, rather than peace through apostasy and sin.** {AG 333.3}

No dinner party on the battle field!

No release from this war, no release from the conflict and the suffering, no peace – except at the loss of Christ and heaven – we cannot accept peace on such conditions.

In the daily battles that sometimes seem to overwhelm me, I desire peace. Reading a quote like this one helps – I am resolved and determined to serve the true God of Heaven, so I can expect opposition from the enemy from this day, until the end of my days on this earth.

Praise God, He has given so many promises to help us and keep us in this conflict: He will keep us all from falling, as we maintain our conflict with the

enemy each day, knowing that He has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us, and will provide all our needs.

I choose to claim His promises to fight the good fight of faith today, and every day.

## Lesson on Blessing/Cursing – My Fear Means My Son Cannot Overcome

(November 27, 2010)

Always learning things. Lessons about **blessings/curses and flow of channel from parent to child.**

Our 12-year-old son has many health challenges. Over the last 2 years and escalating to an intense level in the last 6 months, he has had severe pain in his gut and head, causing some pretty scary aggressive and violent behaviour. Without the communication to tell us what has been wrong, unfortunately it has taken us a long time to work out the reason for the problems. Recently, with some dietary and supplement changes, we believe the Lord has eliminated the pain that has caused the behaviour. He typed to us on his communication board that the pain was gone. Praise God! Hallelujah! I've often said that if we could eliminate the "popping" in his head (as he described it), a lot of our problems would be fixed.

So, it's all fixed right? No – the next zone: We believe he went through a zone of oppression/harassment by Satan and his agencies. He was daily struggling with crippling fear/paranoia. It was a fear that the pain would come back. All day long, he was having struggles with these thoughts and manifesting it in the exact same behaviours, as the pain had caused – still screaming, throwing things, breaking things, hitting us, kicking us. We did a lot of praying daily. Learnt a lot about ourselves.

Unfortunately, over the last couple of years – living with this behaviour from our son – and trying to deal with it – has meant that we have developed our



own paranoia/fear cycle. We were living in fear of anything causing his aggression and violence to manifest.

One of the fears that I had developed, was fear that if our son saw what I was eating which he couldn't eat or saw me cooking food that he couldn't eat, this would set off a barrage of behaviour. So, I started to do cooking when he had gone to sleep at night (hence not getting enough sleep myself at times) and eat in the walk-in pantry, or eat at odd times so I wasn't discovered; and I found myself eating really fast, to get the mealtime over with – almost a chore to have to eat. You would think by my behaviour, I was eating wicked food – but it was normal food (fruits, veggies etc). And while I am eating, I am almost in a state of panic that he will come through the door and see my food – hence my digestion was getting worse. You need to be relaxed to digest food properly.

Assessing my situation, one day last week (I was trying to do some cooking during the day) – I realised that all day long I was in a state of panic.

God showed me my mistake: the channel concepts/blessing concepts, that what is in our hearts as parents, we flow in blessings or curses to our children – that meant that if I am in panic/fear all day long, and I am expecting him to resist the temptation to be in fear/panic, I am expecting the impossible. **My fear shows that I am not trusting God** to help me through the barrage of behaviour if it comes. So, it is unfair to pray for my son to not be living in fear. My fears allowed the devil to have access to my son to fuel his fears!

I repented of my evil in not trusting God, and asked Him to help me to live according to the text: 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

I determined to trust God, rather than live in fear. Mind you, I still try to eat when my son is not around and cook when he is not near, but I am determined to not do this in a spirit of fear, but trust my Heavenly Father.

Well do you know that within a few days of this realisation, and determination – my son's fear/paranoia has ceased. Praise God! Hallelujah!

So, it's all fixed right? No... now I am still getting some of the same behaviour – but now when I question him as to why he screamed, or threw something or hit me – it is now to do with normal emotions. He typed that it is “to show that I am not happy”. For example – that he is not in heaven already/still in this world; that he wants to be where his Dad is (Adrian has had to go away for a couple of weeks, to get to some mountain air for his health); that his ipod's battery needed charging and so it wouldn't work.

So, our next phase – praying that God will teach our son how to communicate about negative emotions in more socially acceptable ways. His aggressive and violent behaviour is “the only way he knows how to show he is not happy”.

Always learning! What a dramatic lesson we've been through on the effect of our hearts' state, on our children, and their ability to overcome temptations.

**It is always necessary for we as parents to change first before we can expect our children to change.** We have learnt this on other issues through our struggles with our son in the last 6 months particularly. *Issues of resentment* in our hearts that our life was too hard, too many trials (wanting that dinner party on the battle field!) – for a period of time our son was struggling with resentments that he couldn't do what his brother could do, so was targeting his aggressive behaviour to his brother and his brother's things. This seemed to be overcome when we were overcoming our own resentments and trusting our lives more into God's hands – trusting that the trials were allowed for our character refinement.

Another lesson we learnt, to our shame, was that we were sending him the message that our *things were more important* to us than he as a person was. When our son had been manifesting this aggressive behaviour and so much property was being damaged (things smashed, holes in walls etc) – obviously it makes parents angry. And being hit and kicked by our own son, also had made us angry. And our behaviour toward him was becoming a bit aggressive back at times – sometimes out of self-defence, but other times out of sheer frustration, and not knowing how to stop all the bad behaviour.

But through all of this – we realised, to our shame, that we were sending our son the message that *things* are more important to us than *he as a person* is. This we have had to repent of and change our behaviour. We have needed to reassure him and comfort him, rather than be abrupt and rough in our manner with him – for his behaviour is usually the result of something inside him that he doesn't know how to handle. And because his life is limited to being at home with me – I am his world: when I have not been kind to him, what hopelessness he must have had to deal with. I pray that God will help me to make his experience in this life sweet – so that he will have some rays of the light from heaven shine across his path.

Oh we have so much to “unlearn”, so much to repent of, so much to “re-learn” – so much growth needed to become like Christ in our manner of dealing with our children. We have so much need for complete trust in God – if I trusted my whole heart to God, I would have no cause for fear at all. Then my son would have greater chance of overcoming his fear.

Praise God for this probationary time. Praise God that through the trials we are growing in our trust of God in every area of our lives; and we are more and more yearning for the Holy Spirit to be in our hearts to make us like Christ.

## But Wait... There Is a Dinner Party on the Battlefield After All!

(January 8, 2011)

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: **for thou art with me**; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. **Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies**: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”  
(Psalm 23:4-5)

There is a table prepared for us in the presence of our enemies – doesn't that sound like “a dinner party on a battle field”?

In a couple of my previous blogs, I had noticed that we are always looking for an easy life, relief from our trials; but this is not to be, we are to have war with our sinful nature and with the devil until the battle is all over.

But what is this table that is before us in the presence of our enemies? Could this be the assurance of Christ's presence with us? Perhaps the "table of shewbread", which was representing the presence of Christ, as the "bread of life" (John 6:48)? We read that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we may fear no evil, for "thou art with me."

So we do have a "dinner party on the battlefield" after all. But it is not what we thought – it is not an easy, comfortable life and relief from our trials. But the dinner party we have is the assurance of the Presence of our Saviour fighting the battles with us on the battle field, giving us strength for the battle. In the heat of the battle we may feast on "the bread of life" in the presence of our enemies, giving us a joy that our enemies may never know – the joy of His presence.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore. (Psalms 16:11)

All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:15)

## The Mind of Christ Can Give Freedom from Self

(May 7, 2011)

Just over a week ago we returned from our holiday to USA, where we met others from this web community – it is so nice to meet others in person who we've connected with online like Frank Klin, Rex, Morgan, Gary & Carolyn Hullquist, Jeff Wilson, Michael & Joy Delaney, Corey and others. It was such a wonderful break for me from the usual pressures at home. The break has been good for me – it has refreshed me with renewed energy to face the home challenges – praise God.

After the conference at Amicolola Falls, we went on a history and heritage road trip with Gary & Carolyn, Jonathon Otto and Andrew Cobbin. We had good times, but part way into the trip Adrian started to get sick. He was able to hold up for most of the road trip, but the last 2 days he was not good at all. By the time we got to Chicago airport to drop the car off and catch planes (for Gary & Carolyn to go home, and for us to fly to San Francisco), Adrian was not in a fit state to fly. We ended up going by Ambulance from the airport to a hospital and spent 5 days in Chicago at the hospital, rather than spending 5 days over in California – seeing some more history/heritage sites and Yosemite & Sequior National Parks.

To be on a trip of a lifetime, and have to miss things we really wanted to see – with a very slim chance (in my mind) of ever being able to come back! It has been such a big exercise to get Daniel (our son with autism) looked after for a 3-week period – I can't see how I'd ever get that opportunity again. So this really tests SELF!

Jeremiah 17:9 says “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” and Romans 7:18 says “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

In situations like this SELF raises its ugly head and a battle begins. I was concerned for what Adrian was going through, caring for him and praying for him; but also feeling self-pity and resentment rise up as I face the reality of our “nice” holiday being ruined. The first time ever Adrian and I have had a holiday together, away from the care of the boys; we've come across to the USA, a once-in-lifetime opportunity; and he has to get sick! I don't find in myself what it takes to accept the situation and place love for others above my selfish musings.

BUT the good news is – the freedom of the gospel in Christ – *I don't have to find within myself the power to overcome the selfishness*. Knowing who I am (one who has no inherent good; one who needs continual physical and spiritual life from God moment by moment) and knowing who Christ is

(God's Son, who came in human flesh and took our carnal nature to the grave, to allow us to partake of His divine nature) – allows me to find the truth of where I can get the power to overcome my selfishness.

Romans 8:3,4 says “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Freedom: I find myself having very selfish and negative thoughts; But Jesus says in John 8:11 “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” God does not condemn me for these thoughts of my carnal nature. But He says (Phillipians 2:5) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” The freedom that I could pray to God: “I don't have in me what I need to love and care for Adrian in this situation and overcome these disappointed, selfish and resentful thoughts. But Jesus has these victories – and I ask that I could have the mind of Christ – so I can have the victory in this situation.”

Praise God for the simplicity of the gospel: I don't have the overcoming power and love I need – Christ has it (He worked it out for me in human flesh) – I can have His mind if I ask Him for it. Freedom and victory!!

Since coming home, both Adrian and I have had to face the same battle – as we take up the usual challenges of caring for a special needs child. The flesh rises up and does not want to do all the things we need to do to care for Daniel. We don't find in ourselves the love we need to have to unselfishly serve. But again, the freedom and victory in Christ: He has what we need – His mind – and we can have it if we ask for it.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)

## David Encouraged Himself in the Lord

(June 12, 2011)

In this precious paragraph is exemplified the character we will need in the future. When we find ourselves with every human support cut off, we will do well to remember how David got the victory: did not look to his circumstances, but rather reminded himself of the many evidences of God's favour in his past, and even though he could not see any way out of the mess he was in, he looked earnestly to God for help, trusting that God could see the way out and teach him what to do. How often am I like the men around David, by dwelling on the circumstances, and looking to the resources within myself for a way out – become discontent and impatient and make my affliction "doubly grievous". I pray that I will learn these lessons now in times of relative peace and safety, that I will act this way in the future time of trouble.

David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death. **In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, looked earnestly to God for help. He "encouraged himself in the Lord."** He reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him? His soul was refreshed in **recalling the many evidences of God's favor.** The followers of David, by their discontent and impatience, made their affliction doubly grievous; but the man of God, having even greater cause for grief, bore himself with fortitude. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Psalm 56:3), was the language of his heart. **Though he himself could not discern a way out of the difficulty, God could see it, and would teach him what to do.** {PP 692.4}

## Respect for God's Appointed Leaders, Even When They Fail

(June 13, 2011)

In my recent reading, I've come across a few examples of men in leadership positions (by God's appointment or allowance) in ancient Israel, who had sinned or apostatized, yet men were still to respect and obey them, unless it caused violation of God's law.

Firstly, David's respect for Saul – the anointed king. Twice, when he had opportunity to slay the sleeping king, he refused – he would not touch God's anointed.

“Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? ...As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed:” {PP 668.3}

And this is the result of such respect, (although the effect in Saul's case, sadly did not last):

The second instance of David's respect for his sovereign's life made a still deeper impression upon the mind of Saul and brought from him a more humble acknowledgment of his fault. He was astonished and subdued at the manifestation of such kindness. In parting from David, Saul exclaimed, “Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.” {PP 671.2}

Secondly, when David was King, he made such a horrible moral fall with Bathsheba, and then had Uriah killed in battle:

Heretofore David's record as a ruler had been such as few monarchs have ever equaled. It is written of him that he “executed judgment and justice unto all his people.” (2 Samuel 8:15). His integrity had won the confidence and fealty of the nation. But as he departed from God and yielded himself to the wicked one, he became for the time the agent of Satan; **yet he still held the position and authority that God had given him, and because of this, claimed obedience that would imperil the soul of him who should yield it.** And Joab, whose allegiance had been given to the king rather than to God, transgressed God's law because the king commanded it. {PP 719.2}



David's power had been given him by God, but to be exercised only in harmony with the divine law. When he commanded that which was contrary to God's law, it became sin to obey. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1), but we are not to obey them contrary to God's law. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, sets forth the principle by which we should be governed. He says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1). {PP 719.3}

Thirdly, Elijah's respect for Ahab (although a very wicked king) – he still acknowledged him as Israel's king.

The shades of night were gathering about Mount Carmel as Ahab prepared for the descent. "It came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel." As he journeyed toward the royal city through the darkness and the blinding rain, Ahab was unable to see his way before him. *Elijah, who, as the prophet of God, had that day humiliated Ahab before his subjects and slain his idolatrous priests, still acknowledged him as Israel's king; and now, as an act of homage, and strengthened by the power of God, he ran before the royal chariot, guiding the king to the entrance of the city.* {PK 158.1}

**In this gracious act of God's messenger shown to a wicked king** is a lesson for all who claim to be servants of God, but who are exalted in their own estimation. There are those who feel above performing duties that to them appear menial. They hesitate to perform even needful service, fearing that they will be found doing the work of a servant. These have much to learn from the example of Elijah. By his word the treasures of heaven had been for three years withheld from the earth; he had been signally honored of God as, in answer to his prayer on Carmel, fire had flashed from heaven and consumed the sacrifice; his hand had executed the judgment of God in slaying the idolatrous prophets; his petition for rain had been granted. *And yet, after the signal triumphs with which God had been pleased to honor his public ministry, he was willing to perform the service of a menial.* {PK 158.2}

From these examples we may learn our position to the appointed leadership – whether it be civil authorities or church leadership – to be respectful, humble, obedient – unless that would make us break God’s law or deny His truth. If leadership is in error: God will work to correct it, but we may help Him do this work by our attitudes and certainly by our prayers for Him to correct things and lead the church in the right direction. We are not in the position of a prophet – as was Elijah or Ellen White, but we can be submissive, gentle and loving; and bring honour to God’s name, while standing firm for His truth.

God has a church upon the earth, who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. {Mar 129.2}

There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port. {Mar 129.3}

When I voyaged from Portland, Maine, to Boston, many years ago, a storm came upon us, and the great waves dashed us to and fro. The chandeliers fell, and the trunks were rolled from side to side, like balls. The passengers were frightened, and many were screaming, waiting in expectation of death. {Mar 129.4}

After a while the pilot came on board. The captain stood near the pilot as he took the wheel, and expressed fear about the course in which the ship was directed. “Will you take the wheel?” asked the pilot. The captain was not ready to do that, for he knew that he lacked experience. Then some of the passengers grew uneasy, and said they feared the pilot would dash them upon the rocks. “Will you take the wheel?” asked the pilot; but they knew that they could not manage the wheel. {Mar 129.5}

When you think that the work is in danger, pray, “Lord, stand at the wheel. Carry us through the perplexity. Bring us safely into port.”

Have we not reason to believe that the Lord will bring us through triumphantly? {Mar 129.6}

You cannot with your finite minds understand the working of all the providences of God. **Let God take care of His own work.** {Mar 129.7}

## Thanksgiving

(November 25, 2011)

At these yearly assemblies the hearts of old and young would be encouraged in the service of God, while the association of the people from the different quarters of the land would strengthen the ties that bound them to God and to one another. **Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them.** As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeyings from Egypt, **so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth.** {PP 540.6}

In USA you have “Thanksgiving” each year – an occasion to have as the prophet suggested – “a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them.” In Australia we do not have the “Thanksgiving” day in our culture. But it would be good if we did. I know a friend of mine from school (here in Australia) had a Thanksgiving dinner with her family and friends.

I would like to praise God for His leading us as a family, from the darkness of error and into the precious light of His grace and truth – especially the truth of who God really is, and the truth of His precious Son.

I would also like to praise God for all our friends – especially for those who we know are praying for us daily. There are some days – I had a couple of days like that this week – where I wake up in the morning and feel the joy and peace that can only come from the presence of God through His Spirit, and the blessing of angels in our home. And I know that our friends are

praying for us – I can feel their effects. We have had some days this week, that our autistic boy, Daniel, has been so happy. Again, I know it is because of the prayers of our friends.

**So, to each of you who have been praying for us, I want to thank you so much.** We know that it is only the grace of God and His blessings, His protection that allows us to have any peace and happiness in our days on earth. And I am so grateful that we can have access to the throne of God by prayer through our Mediator to ask for blessings and protection for each other.

I hope all of you in the USA had a lovely “Thanksgiving” and that it was a joyous occasion, commemorating God’s blessings in bringing you “out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth.”

With love and thanks

Lorelle

## Blessings and Cursings – Lessons from David and Michal

(December 16, 2011)

### **The Sacred Event:**

David is bringing the ark of God into the city of Jerusalem “with gladness” and reverent joy, and praise to God.

And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. (2 Samuel 6:14-15)

... and the music of harp and cornet, trumpet and cymbal, floated heavenward, blended with the melody of many voices. “And David

danced before the Lord,” in his gladness keeping time to the measure of the song. {PP 707.1}

David’s dancing in reverent joy before God.... The music and dancing in joyful praise to God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing. The one tended to the remembrance of God and exalted His holy name. The other is a device of Satan to cause men to forget God and to dishonor Him. {PP 707.2}

### **A Blessing for the Church/People of Israel:**

Once the ark was safely in the tabernacle, and the service of praise was finished, David blessed all the people and gave gifts of food and drink. They all went away to their homes uplifted and blessed by God through David.

And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house. (2 Samuel 6:17-19)

The service ended, the king himself pronounced a benediction upon his people. Then with regal bounty he caused gifts of food and wine to be distributed for their refreshment. {PP 708.5}

All the tribes had been represented in this service, the celebration of the most sacred event that had yet marked the reign of David. The Spirit of divine inspiration had rested upon the king, and now as the last beams of the setting sun bathed the tabernacle in a hallowed light, his heart was uplifted in gratitude to God that the blessed symbol of His presence was now so near the throne of Israel. {PP 708.6}

## **An Intention to Bless Family Members:**

After such a sacred service, having The Spirit of Inspiration rest upon him, and having his heart so full of gratitude to God – being so blessed by God, David wanted to pass on this blessing to his family.

Then David returned to bless his household.... (2 Samuel 6:20)

Thus musing, David turned toward his palace, “to bless his household.” {PP 708.7}

## **BUT – Another spirit was at work:**

Thus musing, David turned toward his palace, “to bless his household.” But there was one who had witnessed the scene of rejoicing with a **spirit widely different** from that which moved the heart of David. “As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul’s daughter looked through a window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and **she despised him in her heart.**” (2 Samuel 6:16). In the **bitterness of her passion** she could not await David’s return to the palace, but went out to meet him, and **to his kindly greeting poured forth a torrent of bitter words. Keen and cutting** was the irony of her speech: {PP 708.7}

“How glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!” (2 Samuel 6:20) {PP 708.8}

## **Blessing Cut Off – Cursed**

We have an explanation for David’s choice of simple dress:

The king had laid aside his royal robes and had attired himself in a plain linen ephod, such as was worn by the priests. He did not by this act signify that he assumed priestly functions, for the ephod was sometimes worn by others besides the priests. But in this holy service he would take his place as, before God, on an equality with his subjects. Upon that day Jehovah was to be adored. He was to be the sole object of reverence. {PP 706.3}

In her pride and arrogancy, Michal despised the humility of David – to lay aside his royal attire and make himself on an equal platform with all the people. She did not treat her husband with the respect, but poured out a torrent of bitter, cutting and sarcastic words. David had come with joy and a “kindly greeting” for his wife, but she brought upon herself a curse – from David, and from the Lord.

David felt that it was the service of God which Michal had despised and dishonored, and he sternly answered: “It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor.” (2 Samuel 6:21,22). To David’s rebuke was added that of the Lord: because of her pride and arrogancy, Michal “had no child unto the day of her death.” (verse 23) {PP 711.1}

## **Lessons for Us**

Are we thinking about being in right connection to God? Or are we more concerned with our standing in this world, and what people think of us? Michal was allowing ‘position’ and ‘standing’ in the view of other people to swallow up thoughts of gratefulness and praise to God. Thus she could not understand her husband’s actions, and rebuked him for them. However, if she had been connected to the “right Spirit,” she might have understood David’s actions, and been ready to receive him with joy – and she and the whole household would have been richly blessed.

How often as wives, we have not understood the decisions or actions of our husbands? Have we responded in the same spirit as Michal? Have we cut off the blessings we and our children could have had from our husbands, by our attitudes or words – our lack of respect for our husbands? Have we spoken words of correction or rebuke to our husbands, rather than appealing to them in love and submission?

*Circumstances that made it difficult for Michal:*

Michal had loved David when they were first married (1 Sam 18:20,28), and helped him flee from her father Saul (1 Sam 19:12). While David was in exile and hunted by Saul, Michal was given to another man (1 Sam 25:44), and David took 2 more wives, Abigail and Ahinoam. Once Saul was dead and David was crowned king over Judah, he took 3 more wives. Then when Abner offered to bring all Israel under his rule also, he asked for his first wife Michal to be restored to him. She was taken from her husband, Phaltiel, and he followed her weeping, but was told to return to his home (2 Sam 3:14-16). Then when he moved the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, he took more wives and concubines (2 Sam 5:13).

*If in doubt, prayer is the key:*

Michal might have been justified in having problems with some of David's decisions and actions – when it was to do with relationships. She may also have been confused by having to leave her 2nd husband, whom she may have loved. David had made mistakes; he was not without fault. Just as our own husbands are human and make mistakes; are not without fault. However, this quarrel she had with him was to do with his actions in worship, and how he conducted himself as the king of Israel. So this was challenging her pride in what she perceived others may think of her husband.

When we have questions about our husband's actions or decisions – the first thing I guess we need to assess is, what spirit is driving us? Are we in line with the Spirit of God – humility, submission, mercy? or are we being driven by any spirit of pride, arrogancy, love of the world, love of other people's approval over God's approval; or fear (the flip-side of pride), or just plain "I want it my way?" Self-examination is always a good idea.

Then we would do well to "pray rather than say." Turn to our loving Saviour (who is our husband's "head") to ask Him to intervene. Of course, our attitude and motives in prayer are also to be examined. We don't want to be demanding of God that our husband be changed and that we are right.

**We want to be willing to have our mind changed if we are wrong.**



If changes need to happen, God may speak to our husband and he may change his mind. Or he may impress us to appeal to our husband about the issue, in a submissive way (not a challenge or rebuke).

Michal couldn't wait until David came into the palace, she took matters into her own hands and went out to meet him. To follow these principles **tests our trust in God** to sort it out, and not being impatient to sort it out ourselves. If we are *patient and wait for God's timing*, and ask Him to guide us in the right way to act, we will be **BLESSED rather than CURSED**.

God bless us all as we journey to the point where we will reflect the image of the relationship between The Father and His Son in our marriages and families.

## Open Thy Mouth Wide, and I Will Fill It

(Deverber 24, 2011)

Over a week ago, I was sitting in the dentist chair, with my mouth wide open (and yes the most painful part is keeping my jaw open). I thought to myself – “What will I think about, to get my mind off what is going on?” Then this text popped into my mind, and I had a chuckle:

*I am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt:  
**open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.** (Psalms 81:10)

How funny – I was sitting there with my mouth wide open, and I was getting a “filling!” I think in moments like these our Father has a sense of humour.

But He had spiritual meaning for me also, and gave me plenty to think about while the procedure was going on. He was telling me that He would fill my mind with peace and contentment, His characteristics, to deal with my present situation, and in any situation that is not entirely pleasant.

In any situation I find myself, I do not need to find within me the strength to deal with fear, anxiety, worry, temptation – if I just open my mouth wide, He

will provide what I need. I need to become helpless as the baby bird who opens his mouth wide to receive the food the mother or father bird has found for him – totally dependent on the parent for its very life.

I want to learn to be totally dependent on God – like the baby bird – like the little children.

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.  
(Matthew 18:3)

## The Sea Divides Friends.

(February 04, 2012)

On this Sabbath, I'm thinking of all of you – our friends here on *Maranathamedia* – scattered all over the world. It would be so nice if we could meet in person to worship together on Sabbaths.

I came across this quote, originally from a Manuscript 33, 1911 (the whole manuscript does not appear to be available on the EG White Writings website – there are just a number of quotes from it in various books). It is in Maranatha p.351 or 7BC p.988. It refers to two Bible texts:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.  
(Revelation 21:1)

But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of broad rivers *and* streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. (Isaiah 33:21)

Here is the quote:

The sea divides friends. It is a barrier between us and those whom we love. Our associations are broken up by the broad, fathomless ocean. In the new earth there will be no more sea, and there shall pass there “no galley with oars.” ...Thank God, in the earth made new there will

be no fierce torrents, no engulfing ocean, no restless, murmuring waves (Manuscript 33, 1911). {7BC 988.1}

There will be a glorious day in the future, when the distances between us will be all ended – no more 14-24 hour flights across the oceans, no more long car trips – but we will all gather together around the throne of our Father and His Son, and drink of the life-giving “broad rivers and streams” and eat from the Tree of Life. On that day, there will be “no more sea” and plenty of other “no more’s”: no more pain, no more sickness, no more disabilities, no more tears, no more tiredness, no more stress, no more violence, no more anger, no more fear, no more worry, no more anxiety, no more trials, no more worthlessness... and wonder of wonders – no more temptations, no more enemy, no more failures, no more SIN, because there will be no more Satan.

What a wonderful day – I plan to meet you all there. Hopefully not long now!

As kids say on a long travel: “Are we there yet?” Not yet, but soon. As was said to Pilgrim in “Pilgrim’s Progress”: “Sooner than you think, but longer than you wish!”

Wishing you all a blessed Sabbath!

love

Lorelle

## Resting in the Channel

(May 5, 2012)

It is wonderful how our Father teaches us lessons through our difficulties.

Over the last month I have been busily working through all our financial papers to hand over to an accountant to prepare our tax returns. I had 3 years of documents to work on (we got behind due to the difficult 2 years we had with our son’s health and behaviour challenges). I wanted to have it

all up-to-date, finished and out of the way before starting my new job. Adrian told me that it was enough to just get 2 years' worth done, so I could rest up and not be worn out when starting my job.

I had already started the 3rd year's documents, and felt that if I just worked really hard a couple more days, I'd get it all finished. But I started waking up each day with a headache because I was pushing myself too much (and not realising that I had stepped outside the channel of our Father's blessings). One day I had a really bad headache, that was threatening to keep me in bed. (In the past migraine headaches with vomiting were a regular occurrence for me.)

My "flesh" was annoyed. I had planned that if I just did one more day, I could have it all finished. After talking about it all with Adrian – he was wondering if I was getting worried about starting work again (after 15 years being at home looking after the family!). It wasn't that, as I was trusting that with God's Spirit dwelling in me, it would be all OK. We came to the conclusion that I had been pushing myself too hard to get the tax documents all finished and more importantly, that I had stepped outside the channel of blessing – just by doing what I wanted to do, rebelling against what Adrian (as my head) had advised me to do.

We have realised that sometimes I have subtly rebelled against "my head" in the channel of blessing. This happens, not by openly being in defiance, but by just "doing it my way" or doing more than is requested/advised, thinking it will be "better." This steps me out of the channel into independence, which is not God's plan, not His way. Everything in God's channel comes through His Son, through the authority figures in our lives, and we are blessed when we stay connected to and are obedient to our "heads" in the channel system. It was Satan who wanted to be independent and do things his own way. So when I want to be "independent" and "do it my way" I am taking part in Satan's kingdom and spirit. And in this condition I cannot be blessed.

Little things in our lives, teach us big lessons. Realising where I had placed myself in the channel, gave me the opportunity to learn how often I may be doing this without meaning to or without being aware of it.

Apology made, a determination to change, and a decision to now leave the rest of the tax documents to later (and a drink of activated charcoal to mop-up-toxins that can lead to a headache): this really bad headache (plus the beginnings of the nausea), all lifted almost instantly. Praise God for improved health and lessons to learn.

My prayer is that I will allow God to work in my life to show me where else I may be still partaking of Satan's kingdom and spirit.

## Praising God for My New Job - Opportunity to Overcome Old Patterns

(May 05, 2012)

Wishing everyone a wonderful Sabbath!!

I just wanted to praise God and give Him thanks for this last week. On Tuesday I started a new job. I have not had a paid job outside the home since November 1996. Our first son, Michael was born in January 1997, closely followed by Daniel in August 1998. With the health challenges that Adrian and Daniel have had, life has been full enough for me staying home. Now that Daniel is well settled in the Special School with transport provided by the school bus, we thought I might be able to get a part-time job during school hours instead of fund-raising each year for Daniel's therapy needs.

After 15 years out of my profession, I never thought I'd be able to get back into it. But through a coincidence looking online, I found a position locally, applied, got the job and here I am back working as a Physiotherapist, although with a difference – as an Injury Management Consultant. It does not require me to be up-to-date with my clinical skills (although I will be doing some assessments/programs in the aged care arena), as most of my

work will be in managing return-to-work programs for injured workers. It will be a bit of learning curve for the rehab consultancy & insurance work, but the learning comes with the job.

My branch manager is a Christian, openly talks about his faith, and is understanding of my position on the Sabbath. He has created an atmosphere of blessing – encouraging his staff; creating a happy, positive and fun team to work with. He tells me that the owner of the whole business has created that staff culture in the entire organisation, and is really generous to reward his staff with bonuses. It's almost like they are operating via a "channel of blessing" structure! God has given me a job in a pretty neat company!

I am really pleased we live in a rural city – no traffic jams and only a 5-minute car trip to get to work. There is plenty of flexibility – I can work from home if I need to (laptop & phone supplied) – so long as the work gets done, and the outcomes are achieved. That may be necessary sometimes due to Daniel's needs. I am only starting with 3 days per week, and by the end of the year I should be working full-time. That is such a blessing, as going straight into full-time work would be a bit of a shock to the system!

One very important thing I am thankful for: My lovely husband has been taking over much of the care of Daniel, and doing lots of the duties in the home I usually do. I have been blessed to come home to a cooked dinner each night. He is so supportive. It is wonderful when the one above you in the channel is pleased and encouraging you in your new adventure! I am truly blessed.

Although this new job is going to help our family financially, I believe the biggest reason God has found this job for me is a spiritual one. Firstly, I will be able to meet a lot more people in our community, pray for them and be a witness for our Lord; and secondly, for my own personal growth. During all the working years previously, I was steeped in getting my value from achievement and performance. This brings with it the fear of not being "good enough", which kills creativity. It is an independent mind-set: feeling

that I had to find within myself the ability to do my work, not having learnt dependence on my Heavenly Father.

So now I have the chance to overcome some more remnants of the “old man” and become a new creature in Christ Jesus. I can now ask for the Spirit of God to dwell within me, to be the wisdom I lack, to be the efficiency I lack, to be the “lateral thinking”/“thinking outside the box” that I lack for my new job. I have a new opportunity to learn entire dependence on God as I work. I can have His love for others, His compassion for those who are injured, His peace (rather than fear and turmoil) in my heart as I work, His confidence and His blessing that I may be a channel to bless others in the community.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:10)

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

## Our Heavenly Father’s Care for Little Things That Trouble Us

(May 26, 2012)

I bought a ‘usb memory stick’ to use between home and work. I found one that was green – my favourite colour!

After unpacking it, I put it in a ‘safe place’ so I wouldn’t lose it (as they are not that big). Over the next few days, I forgot where that ‘safe place’ was.

For a few days I kept looking for it in all the places I could think of – at home and at work. I thought I must have lost it – maybe I accidentally threw it out in some shopping bags. It seemed I might have to spend the money all over again.

Yesterday, I thought, it must be here somewhere, so I started looking again. Then I thought my Heavenly Father is interested in all the things that trouble us, so I asked Him (because of course He knew where it was) if He would show me where it was. The instant after I prayed that prayer, I noticed a little zip pocket in my new computer bag that I'd forgotten was there. I looked in there – and there was the usb memory stick!

I pray that these quotes may be a blessing to you – to realise how much our Heavenly Father cares about us in our everyday happenings, and wants to bless us, as we show our faith in Him.

What a wonderful God to help us in little things like that. We could think that He would be too busy keeping the Universe running to be interested in the little things that puzzle us, but He is so close to us and knows our every thought, by His Spirit. I had cause to Praise Him for His care for me.

But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:7)

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. (Acts 17:28)

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His



children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

I pray that these quotes may be a blessing to you – to realise how much our Heavenly Father cares about us in our everyday happenings, and wants to bless us, as we show our faith in Him.

## Prayer Changes Things

(September 22, 2012)

Wow – I haven’t written a blog since May. That is since shortly after commencing work again! Being a working mum is a busy life!

I have a good news story to tell from my work. My manager wanted me to do a training course that will enable me to do a certain type of assessment with clients in my work. The course is run by an international company, called WorkHab. Looking on their website all their courses in the world are run on a weekend – Saturday and Sunday. I explained to my manager (who is a Christian) that I cannot do a course for my work that is run on Saturday, due to the belief that God has asked me in His 10 Commandments to keep the Sabbath holy. He asked me whether there was some “clause in the contract” that would give me exemption to do this course! Well it’s just not like a business contract! I made it clear that I could not do the course on Saturdays. He stated that WorkHab only ever run their courses on a weekend – Saturday and Sunday, so there was no way to not do it on a Saturday.

I told him I would pray that they might run a course that does not involve Saturday. I found out that the company I work for had asked WorkHab to run a course just for our staff. So I explained my reasoning to the man organising it in our company and appealed to him to ask if WorkHab would

make an exception to their usual practice and run the course for us on a Sunday and Monday. He stated that as WorkHab only ever run their courses on a weekend, it may be out of his hands.

I also emailed my request directly to WorkHab, and in their response, they stated that they only ever run the courses on a weekend, as that is what people seem to want.

We of course prayed a lot that God would bring a willingness on those organising the course to run the course on a Sunday and Monday.

In situations like this I've often claimed Proverbs 21:1 as a promise that God can impress and guide the hearts of those in authority positions:

The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

And another appropriate promise in these situations is Isaiah 45:2,

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight:

Well – God is good – I will be attending the course on Sunday and Monday October 7th and 8th!!

It paid to ask questions, explain my position and remain firm / no compromise – but most importantly to pray to our Heavenly Father, trusting that the hearts of all men are in His hands, for Him to influence as He sees best.

I have an example and inheritance from my Grandfather about remaining true to his convictions on the Sabbath, and that had a widespread influence in Australia (here is an extract from something I recently wrote about his history):

My grandparents, Lindsay and Vera Cameron began reading and studying, and accepted the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They lived out near Cowra, NSW, and in 1939 my grandfather got a labouring job with the newly established Soil Conservation Station. Because of his conviction that he should keep the seventh-

day Sabbath, he would not work on Saturday. He asked the management if he could try to get through his work in 5 days. When his workmates saw that he could do this, they also wanted to do a 5-day week, and so at that soil conservation station all the workers had a 5-day week. It then progressed to other establishments, then to head office and eventually it was gazetted in Parliament. Therefore, due to my grandfather's conviction to keep the Sabbath, he is responsible for the public service having a 5-day working week.

May God bless you all as you make firm decisions about your beliefs in whatever situation you are in.

## Fear/Selfishness to Unlearn – Agape Love/Submission to Learn

(September 3, 2013)

I have much to unlearn and much to learn regarding relating to the authority figures God has placed in my life. As an example of how NOT to operate in relation to authority figures over us, I will share an experience of mine.

As many of you know, Adrian and I have a son with autism. A number of years ago, I commenced some therapy that cost a few thousand dollars, and it did have some positive effects for Daniel. However, due to a stressful time – Adrian's health downturn leading him to need time off work, selling our house to be debt free, moving a number of times to find a better location to regain health – I was unable to continue to perform the therapy for Daniel. A couple of years later, when things were a bit more stable for us, I wanted to recommence the therapy. This would have required another couple of thousand dollars of expenditure. Because I was unable to follow through with the therapy earlier, I thought Adrian might not approve of spending any more money on it (as I might not be able to follow through on it again). However, out of desperation to help our autistic son, I really wanted to go ahead with the therapy. I justified it, due to the fact that I had the money to pay for it, thanks to our previous fund-raising ventures and the fact that it

would be beneficial to Daniel. I was determined that this time I will follow through on the daily therapy and make it work. So, I booked the appointment for the re-assessment with the therapists. Then I told Adrian about it. I went ahead with it. But I was not blessed in the process. I was able to follow through with the daily therapy sessions for a number of months, but then – again due to moving house, health issues and Daniel’s behaviour (due to a parasite infection) – I had to abandon the daily therapy.

On reflection on the whole process, we realised that I had violated the “divine pattern” of operation in the channels of authority. I justified my actions: I had a really good cause for my action (love for my autistic son and trying to help him to improve); I had the money for the therapy (although by not being able to follow through – it ended up being money wasted) – but “the end does not justify the means.” I went about the process in an independent fashion, not consulting the wisdom of my husband. I did not even ask his opinion, for fear that he might oppose what I wanted to do. When it was time to have the appointment, I just informed him that was what I was doing. I hid information from the God-appointed authority in my life – my husband. I acted independently and did not even allow him input in the decisions. This brings a reminder of how Eve operated when she was tempted to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. She operated independently of her husband, trusting that she had sufficient wisdom to make the right decision. The deed was done before her husband was given a chance to have input into the decision.

To operate independently and in a deceptive manner, hiding information from the authority figures above us – fearing that they might not approve of what we want to do – is against the Divine Pattern of God’s Kingdom. The Son of God does not act independently from His Father, nor does He hide information from His Father in making any decisions, or doing any action. They are “one” in Spirit and The Son represents His Father in all things.

I am sure this is only one of many instances where I have operated in a manner of independence driven by fear or shame. My ways of operation

have been habitual from how I operated with my parents. I have much to unlearn and much to learn.

Inheritance from our parents, from our first parents (Adam & Eve), have taught us all to operate in deception, hiding from the authority figures in our lives – fear drives a lot of what we do.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:7-10)

Fear and selfishness are our inheritance from our first parents – the inheritance we have in Satan’s kingdom – where selfishness and fear reign! We have much to unlearn in relating to authority figures over us, be they in marriage, in churches, relating to governments, or those paying our wages etc. I/We have so much more to learn about how to make an Appeal to our authority figures with the information we have, rather than hiding from them what we want to do out of fear that they will not approve and let us proceed.

Let’s all keep striving to be more like our great Pattern – The Son of God – who lives in perfect submission to His Father. He does not live in fear – because perfect love casts out fear. Let’s all keep learning more of the Agape love of our Father, manifest in His Son, that all fear and selfishness will be driven out of our lives and replaced by the Agape love of our Saviour and our Father.

There is no fear in love; but perfect **love** casteth out **fear**: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

# Praise God – A Song and Answered Prayer!

(January 14, 2014)

Moving house again! Moving house for the 19<sup>th</sup> time in 21 years of marriage – and for the 29<sup>th</sup> time since leaving my parents' home almost 27 years ago!! As you can tell, we're quite experienced at this past-time! From a "tree change" to a "sea change" this time! But with a slight complication – breaking a lease! (So that we are resettled in time for school start 28<sup>th</sup> January for the boys). This means if another tenant is not found for our current house, we still have to pay rent until the end of the lease (end of March). Not believing that God would want us to pay double rent, we have been praying and trusting. However, it would take some divine intervention, as there are a number of houses available for rent in our area (some cheaper than ours too!), and there seems a shortage of people to rent them.

The next problem is finding a new home to rent – as there seems a shortage of rentals available, and an abundance of people wanting them, in our new area. One home we wanted to look at had 35 others interested! We soon lost interest in that one.

A bit concerned about the situation, a few weeks back, praying and choosing to trust our Heavenly Father's love for us, I woke in the morning with a song playing in my head. It was a Scripture song:

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7)

I grasped that as a promise my Heavenly Father was speaking to me – that if we abide in Christ, our requests for new tenants and a new home would be answered. I shared my experience of the song with Adrian, and we chose to believe that God would answer our prayers in His time.

Praise God for the answers: A week ago, we had a look at another home (the 7<sup>th</sup> we'd looked at) and it was the nicest we'd seen so far, and surprisingly no-one else was looking at it. We applied for it, and were approved in just over 2 hours. On the same day, some people were shown through our

current home, liked it and stated that they would be put in an application. One Monday, they put in their application, and we got word on Thursday that they have been approved. So, they move in when we move out! Both our prayer requests answered in the positive.

How kind of our Heavenly Father to put that song in my mind a few weeks ago, to give me the assurance of His love and care.

Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. (Psalm 146:1)

Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:8)

Wishing you all a wonderful year of abiding in Christ, and answered prayer!

## Prioritising Victories

(December 21, 2015)

It's Friday. There is a lot on my "To Do List". There is way too much to fit into one day! (What's new about that?) There is ironing, washing, sorting washing, making beds, cleaning the floors and the bathrooms. Then there's my "to cook today" list! (I was away for 2 weeks, and since I've been home I've been too busy for much cooking – so some nice food for Sabbath would be lovely for the family). There's an order to do online, so I get the products before the year-end shut down of the company. There are a few emails that need to be sent. I need to go out to the Pharmacy to pick up a script and the Fruit/Veggie market for a few more veggies. And on it goes. But I am so tired today. The last week I've been "House-Hunting". We need to move further north to be closer to the University our older son will be studying at next year. So, the last week has been a constant round of searching the rentals online, phone calls, travelling, viewing homes, and then applying for the one we've analysed as the best for our needs. Yesterday my efforts were rewarded; our application on a home was successful and we feel very blessed. What an exhausting week. Now I'm fatigued.

Now, back to that "To Do List". How to sort out what can be done, what can't be done, what should be done, what can be left undone – prioritising!! What a struggle this has been through my whole life. It has caused an enormous extra burden of internal stress. Typically, I would just get started on the "To Do List" and work 'flat-out', trying to get it all done – myself! Multiple layers of internal stress occur:

- Knowing there is too much to fit into a day, but trying anyway, causes me to be in a stressed state all day long – trying to do everything in as little time as possible;
- The self-talk of condemnation (because you know it is stupid trying to "do it anyway" – but I don't know how else to do this!);
- Knowing that I should be getting others to help, but unable to prioritise so that I can work out what I need help with – another source of condemnation (it is stressful when you are so busy and help is offered but you don't know what they can help you with!);
- Feelings of inadequacy ("there must be something wrong with me") about my lack of ability to work out priorities;
- And then the big one – condemning myself for the decisions I've made – "you should have done that first, now you can't fit this in!"

To think that all this stress is so un-necessary and I've caused it myself. And this doesn't just happen on Fridays, when getting ready for Sabbath. It can be any time, especially when there is a time limit – for example getting ready to go on holidays, or getting things done before being out for a whole day. Yes, I have a lot to do because I have an autistic son. Yes, there are a lot of external sources of stress. But I've come to realise that the majority of my stress, which has been a major contributor to any health issues I've suffered, is this internal, un-necessary stress. And it means that I am not in a state of trusting God. I am not following the counsel of Philippians 4:6 "Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."



It's great when God reveals things about myself in a new light – even if I don't have the solution, it is good to be able to recognise and analyse the disordered patterns of thinking. I have wanted to trust God in every aspect of my life. But there are patterns of thinking and ways of operating in the internal world of my mind that are preventing me from trusting God fully – and putting me out of line with God's Kingdom of love, freedom and liberty.

These disordered ways of thinking probably start when we are very young children – Satan lies to us (either directly suggesting thoughts in our minds or words spoken to us, especially by significant family members) and we believe those lies. These lies grow and develop and take on a life of their own unrelated to the initial incident where they began. They affect how we view our value in the eyes of God and other people. We are held captive to wrong patterns of thinking. But God is in the business of "setting the captives free."

Jesus said, in John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Jesus' mission was to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1)

Recently I read a book by Dr Timothy R. Jennings called *Could It Be This Simple – A Biblical Model for Healing The Mind*. I quote here from his book where he is discussing the issue of worthlessness in the story of one of his patients called 'Jane':

"One of the most common problems facing many of my patients is the sense of worthlessness... The greatest mistake people make when dealing with difficult feelings is that of accepting them as true... Such negative ideas reinforce the feeling of worthlessness, which when nurtured, matures into a well-entrenched false belief. With this false belief firmly ingrained, the mind begins to filter experiences through it. Experiences that support the distorted self-image get replayed repeatedly, further strengthening the feeling and belief of worthlessness. Meanwhile, the mind discounts and rejects positive experiences that should refute the false belief. Jane was living in such self-imposed mental anguish. She felt trapped and didn't know how

to find her way out.” Timothy Jennings, *Could It Be This Simple – A Biblical Model for Healing The Mind*, p.86, 87.

Following our feelings, which shape our thoughts (our beliefs, values, morals and imagination) – we get trapped in patterns of thoughts from early childhood, that have us trapped in “self-imposed mental anguish!”

Now back-track a few months: I had a day when I felt really upset, frustrated and angry – but I could not really identify why I felt that way. It must have been tapping into some anger and resentment still lurking deep inside about “life in general”. I thought I’d dealt with that some years ago, when I realised that deep down, I was resentful at my lot in life, and ultimately that meant I was angry at God for ordering my life the way He had. I did some repenting, and changing my way of thinking back then. Perhaps there was still some of this still lurking below the surface. I wanted to be free from any resentment and anger towards God or any other person. Participating in a gathering at a “Feast of Tabernacles” time this year, I asked for a prayer of blessing, to be free from all the anger and resentment and anything else deep inside that would be putting a barrier in my relationship with God. If God would be honouring His appointed times with a greater measure of His blessings, I wanted to partake in the blessings He could offer me at that time.

Over the months since that prayer, I have been more aware of my “self-imposed” stress and “mental anguish”. I have been able to catch the thoughts, and analyse them, and realise what I am doing to myself. I had previously thought that there was just something wrong with me and I couldn’t get out of this state of mind.

Dr Jennings discusses the concept of catching thoughts and feelings and elevating them to the higher functions of the mind to compare them with truth.

“It is imperative to recognize the importance of the will. Everything depends on the right action of the will because it is the part of the mind that chooses... Elevating feelings to the reason and conscience for examination and investigation in light of the facts, evidence, and

truth, and then choosing to follow that truth will always restore order and bring peace to the mind. The greatest battle is learning to value truth because it *is* true, not just because it *feels* true.” Ibid, p.88, 89

“Spiritual warfare is the engagement of the spiritual nature (reason, conscience, worship) to battle unhealthy feelings, lies, misrepresentations, passions and lusts that try to take control of the will and dethrone the reason. It is the process of using God’s methods to overcome the influence of our genetic weakness, heal our emotional wounds, and restore balance to our damaged minds.” Ibid p.98

In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Paul discusses this spiritual warfare – “pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Dr Jennings goes on to discuss the mind being like a garden:

“Imagine that you have a garden, one that you have faithfully tended and that now produces a bountiful harvest. What will happen to your garden if you stop cultivating it? Will it continue to bear good fruit, or will the weeds eventually destroy it?

“In a similar way, our minds naturally bring up weeds – selfish thoughts, ideas, and conceptions. It is Christ who works through the Holy Spirit to plant the seeds of truth in our minds, He then nurtures and protects the seeds, enabling them to grow in to the fruits of a Christlike character. By utilizing the Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God, the truth) we weed our minds, uprooting the lies and false theories that keep us captive, and thus allow us instead to maintain a healthy and productive mental garden.

“One of the best descriptions of this process appears in Ellen G. White’s *The Desire of Ages*.

“The Comforter is called “the Spirit of truth.” His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and

peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.” {DA 671.1} Ibid, p.99, 100

So, over the last few months, since that prayer of specific blessing, I have been able to allow God’s Spirit to make me aware of my disordered thinking, catch those thoughts to analyse them with my reasoning. I recognise that thoughts of stress, anxiety, fear do not fall in line with the promises Jesus made about how our life should be with the Comforter in our hearts: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27); “Be careful [anxious] for nothing...” (Philippians 4:6); “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7). The Holy Spirit’s work was to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” and He is called “The Spirit of truth” and “he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:8,13). Therefore, He has been at work convicting me of sin and unrighteousness. And giving me the power to *reject the past disordered thinking and choose new thought patterns*. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13). His promise is then peace, joy (John 14:27; 15:11) and “power, love, a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

I realised this is the gradual, daily process of sanctification – bringing my feelings, thoughts and will in line with God’s character. Jesus’ prayer had been: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth... that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” (John 17:17,19). Sanctification does not come in an instant. It is a process, so it has taken me some months to gradually get more able to catch my wrong thoughts, analyse them and choose correct thoughts in the area of prioritisation.

We are looking beyond time; we are looking to eternity. We are trying to live in such a way that Christ can say, Well done, good and faithful

servant. Let us live, every one of us, in that way. We may make mistakes; we may err; but God will not leave us in error. “If we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” There is hope for us; we are prisoners of hope. Let us grasp the rich promises of God. The garden of God is full of rich promises. Oh, let us gather them; let us take them home; let us show that we believe in God. Let us take Him at His word; let not one of us be found distrusting God or doubting Him. Let us be growing Christians. We are not to stand still. We are to be in advance today of what we were yesterday; every day learning to be more trustful, more fully relying upon Jesus. Thus we are to grow up. You do not at one bound reach perfection; sanctification is the work of a lifetime.... {4MR 343, 344 and 3SM 192,193}

Now, back to my “To Do List” today – I was too tired, from such a busy week. And the burden of “house-hunting” was over, as we had been approved for a house, so my body went into a bit of “let go” mode. There was way too much on my list to fit into the one day. I did pray and ask God to help me sort out how to order my day. So I found myself deciding to do things that really needed doing first – like the online order and emails, the outing to the Pharmacy and fruit/veggie market, and the washing. Then I decided that we really didn’t need any fancy food for Sabbath, we could have some basic simple things to eat. That would save me a whole pile of effort and time. Now that that was all catered for, what time was left and what could I fit in? Well other family members were able to sort the washing, make the beds, and help with the cooking and dishes. And I then had time to clean the floors, deciding the cleaning the bathrooms could wait for another day. As Sabbath was opened, I realised today had been a major victory for me in “Prioritisation”! The Lord had given me the ability to work out what was necessary, what could be left undone. And in the process, I did not have my usual “internal stress”. Praise God for victories gained from months of practicing choosing new ways of thinking that involve trusting in God.

# Come to the Camp Meeting

(October 12, 2016)

I am looking forward to our upcoming Feast of Tabernacles Camp Meeting. The fellowship we shared when we had our Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread Camp Meeting earlier this year here in Australia, was so special – a taste of heaven on earth. We also enjoyed a weekend of fellowship in Brisbane around the Day of Pentecost. For both of these times, we enjoyed fellowship with brothers and sisters from our local area and those who came from quite far away. The joy of our fellowship included: singing hymns together; eating, talking or walking together; enjoying meetings where we explore topics we are learning more about; and the special times of foot washing and the communion services. There was a general feeling at the end of the camp / weekend that it would be good to stay in this mode of fellowship and not leave to go home – one day this will be a reality, in the great Feast of Tabernacles in Heaven.

Reflecting on these times of fellowship, there is no hint of “legalism” in “keeping the Feasts” that I experienced. There are no rituals that must be done. There is just an experience of “being there” ready to receive a blessing in these Appointed Times of Refreshing from the Lord. I came to realise that we get so caught up in our day-to-day lives, operating in a world that operates on Satan’s principles of getting our value and satisfaction from “achieving” something, gaining recognition from others for “doing” something, or from “owning” things. By coming aside from our usual lives to meet together for an extended time, such as a camp meeting, gives us an opportunity to live in a mode where the principles of God’s Kingdom are the basis of all our relationships – getting our value from accepting God’s offer to be His son or daughter through His Son, Jesus. I think we NEED these times, to teach us how to live in God’s Kingdom of relationships being most important, rather than our usual Satan’s Kingdom where getting things done is most important.

So my encouragement to anyone considering seeing what a Feast is like – come and see that the Lord is good.

Here are some passages from Ellen White's writings where she encouraged members to attend camp meetings:

It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp meetings. The enemies of truth are many; and because our numbers are few, we should present as strong a front as possible. Individually you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth. {6T 38.3}

Some will say: "It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for us to save the money and give it for the advancement of the work where it is so much needed." Do not reason in this way; God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of His people. Strengthen the meeting all you possibly can by being present with your families. Put forth extra exertion to attend the gathering of God's people. {6T 39.1}

Brethren and sisters, it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you. Make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. You need every ray of light. You need to become qualified to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege. {6T 39.2}

Anciently the Lord instructed His people to assemble three times a year for His worship. To these holy convocations the children of Israel came, bringing to the house of God their tithes, their sin offerings, and their offerings of gratitude. They met to recount God's mercies, to make known His wonderful works, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to His name. And they were to unite in the sacrificial service which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus they were to be preserved from the corrupting power of worldliness and idolatry. Faith and love and gratitude were to be kept alive in their hearts, and through their association together in this sacred service they were to be bound closer to God and to one another. {6T 39.3}

In the days of Christ these feasts were attended by vast multitudes of people from all lands; and had they been kept as God intended, in the spirit of true worship, the light of truth might through them have been given to all the nations of the world. With those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle, more than a month of every year must have been occupied in attendance upon these holy convocations. The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. They needed to turn away from their worldly cares, to commune with God, and to contemplate unseen realities. {6T 39, 40.}

**If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict! And if the people of the world then needed the light which God had committed to His church, how much more do they need it now! {6T 40.2}**

Ellen White encouraged the church to come to a Feast of Tabernacles, when she was in Australia and New Zealand:

December 8, 1893 Come to the Feast.

“What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?” John 11:56.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Australia: The first Australian camp-meeting among us as a people is about to take place. This meeting will mark a new era in the history of the work of God in this field; it is important that every member of our churches should be present, and I urge you all to come. The enemies of truth are many, and though our numbers are few, we would present as good a front as possible. Individually you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth.

I am afraid that some will say, “It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for me to save the money, and give it for the advancement of the work, where it is so much needed.” Do not reason in this way; for God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of his people. You are to be there in person, and to strengthen the meeting all you possibly can. Let no one say, “I will remain at home, and let some one else go;” for we want to see you, and the somebody



else as well. Let no stay-away argument be used. We know that the believers in the truth are scattered widely; but make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. Come to the meeting, and bring your families. Put forth extra exertions, and be at the gathering of God's people.

Brethren and sisters, it would be better, far better, for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity to hear the message that God has for you at this time. You need every ray of light; for you are acquainted with the truth only in a measure, and need to become better qualified to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Come with your Bibles in your hands. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege as you are now favoured with, and we entreat you not to disappoint us by staying away from the meeting. We look upon this time as a time when it is important for every one to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. {BEcho, December 8, 1893}

Appeal to Attend the Camp Meeting--Dear Brethren and Sisters in New Zealand: I have an appeal to make to our churches to attend the coming camp meeting in Wellington. You cannot afford to lose this opportunity. We know that this meeting will be an important era in the history of the work in New Zealand. There should be particular efforts made to get a representation of those who believe the truth to this meeting, for the very reason we are so few in numbers, and the additional help of everyone is called for. The enemies of truth are many in numbers. On such an occasion as this we want to present as good a front as possible. Let not your business detain you. You individually need the benefits of this meeting.... {11MR 7.4}

I fear quite a number will say, It is expensive to travel, and I had better save the money to use in advancing the cause and work where it is so much needed. No, no! God calls for you to take your rank and file, and strengthen the work all you possibly can by your personal presence. Let not one say, I attended the camp meeting in Napier, and that will answer; I will remain and let somebody else go. We want you and the somebody else as well. Let no stay-away argument be used. We have need of every spiritual advantage we can possibly have.

We know that believers are scattered, but we want you to make no excuses. {11MR 8.1}

The Lord wants you to come to the meeting and to bring your families, except the little ones who would only tie your hands. Put forth extra exertions. Better, far better, let the business suffer than to neglect the opportunity to hear the messages that God has for you at this time. {11MR 8.2}

You need every jet of light you can obtain. You are acquainted with the truth in a measure, but you ought to become better acquainted with the reasons of our faith. Come with your Bible in your hand, for you ought to have a better knowledge of the sanctifying influence of truth upon heart and character. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege as you are now favored with. You must not now disappoint us. We look to this time as important to have everyone come up “to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty” (Judges 5:23). {11MR 8.3}

We see that the forces of the enemy are strengthening, and that the ministers in every place are making earnest efforts to oppose the truth, and more so in Wellington than any place I ever visited. Everything is said to present Seventh-day Adventists as only a few in number, and inferior in every respect, possessing little influence. And shall we not on this occasion represent the believing rank and file the very best that we possibly can? **Will our brethren not come up to the feast of tabernacles?** How zealously should everyone guard the way that leads to the city of God! If we treat the work as an indifferent matter, and the army of the Lord is not on the ground to represent the cause and work in New Zealand, God will not be pleased with your neglect. Will you plead excuses, and at such a time? {11MR 9.1}

...God holds you personally responsible for the advancement and honor of His cause in this country. **Bear in mind God’s plan was that His people should assemble together to worship not less than three times a year. The Lord has not signified it to be your duty to do this, but He calls you. He wants you to come up “to**

the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”  
{11MR 10.1}

... Make every effort to get your friends to come, not in your place but to accompany, to stand on God’s side, under God’s command. At the very best our numbers will not be large, but if the individual members of the church will come to the Wellington camp meeting, with a mind and will to work to the best of their ability, God will do the rest. We cannot but see the schemes and working of the enemies of our faith. Let the prayers go forth from unfeigned lips, “Hear, O our God; for we are despised.” “Think upon me, my God, for good.” “Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hand.” (Nehemiah 4:4; 5:19; Nehemiah 6:9.) {11MR 10.3}

... I again urge you for the truth’s sake, for Christ’s sake, to come up to this meeting. Elder Olsen will be at the meeting and other helpers from America, and we want a heavenly sitting together in Christ Jesus, and a rich reward in blessing will come to the people. I leave these lines with you, and beg of you response. We want to see the salvation of God. There must be a waking up among believers. Each may be so imbued with the spirit of the work that he will be a Nehemiah, possessing holy energy and faith and hope, thus strengthening one another’s hands, depending wholly on God, the great and mighty Worker.--Letter 8a, 1893. (Written October 31, 1893, at Gisborne, New Zealand.) {11MR 12.2}

## Living in the Channel

"For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health...I will walk beside you in the journey of life." Who can know the trials and triumphs which lay ahead when two people commit themselves to a life time together.

When autism touched our lives, we were pressed by many challenges culminating at the same time that my husband came to the conviction that the Trinity was not biblical.

Navigating these events, maintaining my faith in God, standing beside my husband, and caring for my children led me through a dark valley.

This book contains a series of articles which I penned in some of my darkest hours. Praying for God to guide my husband in his search for truth, while praying for God to guide me to help and heal my younger son while supporting and blessing my older one.

These articles were written over a period of about five years and provide some insight into my thinking, processing and praying through life's joys and sorrows.

All in all, our Father has been faithful from beginning to end. He has never failed me, but given me the desire of my heart.