

*A Woman's Place Ministries
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What a wonderful time of year! Here in Nebraska, Spring is breaking out everywhere! I walked through Dillards yesterday and was thrilled by all the new spring colors blossoming throughout the store. It was like breathing in fresh air, and my heart soared!

You are Invited

For those in the southern California area, I will be ministering April 16, 17, and 18, at the Family Life Center, 7435 Norwalk Blvd., in Whittier, CA. The church number is 562-692-9396. This is scheduled to be an awesome women's conference, and it would be wonderful to see you there. The theme for the conference is "Help Me Heal." For those of you in the midwestern area, I will be in Taylorville, Illinois May 7, 8, and 9. If you are not tied up with your local church, we'd love to have you join us. If you can't make it, please remember to pray for me, and that God will do wondrous works in the hearts of everyone involved. Your sisters are hurting, Ladies, and need your prayers like never before.

"There is therefore now no condemnation..." Romans 8:1

I think a good many of us, especially women in a leadership capacity of some sort, have a personal struggle with imagined guilt. We tend to be perfectionists, and overly conscientious; therefore, what another person without this kind of personality might let slide, we take to heart. Do you fall into this kind of thinking? It can catapult us into a depression if we don't learn how to manage it. What happens is we end up expecting more of ourselves than others expect. We are more demanding on ourselves and so we perceive failure when there is none. We might think we have failed at a task, when the one we are performing it for thinks we did an excellent job. And if they tell us we did an excellent job, we think they're just being nice, that's all...and begins again the discouraging spiral. Do you relate to this? And we perceive too often that we have failed the Lord when the reality of the matter is, He is quite pleased with us. I personally think we can be a lot harder on ourselves than the Lord is. All of that leads to a "guilt" that is not real. We must learn to distinguish between real guilt and this false guilt.

My primary ministry is to women, and I love it. I love everything about it. But sometimes it's other women we have the most problems with, and I wish it didn't have to be that way. But other women can get jealous because they don't hold the position we do, or have the talents we do. I hear over and over again things like this: "I don't know what I'm doing wrong, Sister Doty, but it must be something..." "I've tried so hard to restore my friendship with Sister so-and-so, and it seems like I just can't seem to do the right thing...no matter what I do, it's wrong. I'm a mess..."

One woman I knew years ago held a responsible position in our local church, and yet she was jealous because the pastor asked me to do a certain project. She made things so difficult for me, and ended up manipulating things so that she was given the project. After a few

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months, she dropped it. People who used to be best friends can suddenly act like our worst enemies.

One female minister-on-staff I know is having all kinds of hurtful problems with the wife of another minister-on-staff. These two women used to be best friends and now the wife is barely speaking to the minister. My friend has done nothing wrong, except do everything right. The minister's wife is seething with jealousy. These things are so difficult to work with and work around. Reconciliation is sorely necessary, because it is soul damaging, and church divisive. The devil loves it when he can cause division like this. Anything to halt the progress of the work of God.

I know that many of you are facing these kinds of things. Of course you go to prayer at the very beginning (right?). And God has given you direction and guidance in how to handle it (right?). And nothing has worked. That is when we have to do what Paul admonishes in Ephesians 6:13,14—"*having done all, stand...*" After Paul says that, he goes on to say, first of all, that our faith is going to be tested. That's why he tells us, first of all, to take the shield of faith. You see (and you know this) God hears our every prayer, and when it is in His will—and restoring unity in the Body IS—you know He will answer that prayer. But he is dealing with human hearts, and it might take some time. Our job is to stand. To wait on God. Be sweet, keep your attitude right, and stay in prayer for the person and about the situation. God will work it out—we can't tell him when, we can't tell him how. But He will.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood... Ephesians 6:12

One thing that is so very important to remember here—and it's taken me a long time to learn this!—is that we are not dealing with flesh and blood. My young minister friend is not dealing with the flesh-and-blood minister's wife. This thing is a spiritual battle. That's why Paul immediately went on to describe the spiritual armor after telling us to stand. I worked at a place once where a couple of the people felt threatened and wanted me out. They listened in on phone conversations, regularly ran to the administration with accusations, actively worked to turn others against me. During this battle, I found myself fighting the flesh-and-blood troublemakers—in my flesh, of course—and I lost! It was a humiliating experience and one I pray I never repeat. I lost sight of the fact of who was really behind all this—it wasn't that couple—it was the enemy of my soul!

The war we are in is not a war that we can see with the physical eyes. But all around us angels—good angels and evil angels—are carrying on the fight. These angels speak to our minds. They whisper thoughts and suggestions to us. If we remain prayed up and attuned to the spiritual, we will hear the good angels and respond in wisdom. If we get caught up in the fleshly battle, we grow carnal, and will hear the bad angels—and react in dangerous and foolish ways.

The coming of the Lord is so near. We are admonished in His Word to work while we can, for the night cometh when no man can work. I believe that's where we are, and that's why we have to overlook so many things. We can't afford to get offended in these closing hours. The enemy will try his best to get us offended and diverted, and looking at relationships

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gone sour instead of keeping our eyes on the goal. Paul says in Hebrews 12:1,2 *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured...."* And so must we. *"He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved."* Matthew 24:13. The very choice of the word "endure" warns us that there will be pain along the way. But we have One who came to bear our pain and our suffering! We have One who knows what it's like to hurt! And we have One who is a Healer and a Deliverer! Praise God!

My burden now is that you will take this to heart and learn to look straight ahead at the prize. I Corinthians 9:24, Paul tells us to run, that we may obtain the prize. When I'm running I don't look all around me. I look straight ahead. I have to keep on the path I'm running. It's a lot more dangerous to run into a brick wall, than to walk into it. We have to keep our eyes on the prize. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:14. Pressing toward the mark means to push against. Pushing against something requires all our concentration. Praise God! I feel the Holy Ghost.

It seems there's always one thing after another popping up in my life and my ministry to get me distracted. One thing that has been working is computer problems! I've gone through four brand new computers in less than two years. Several crashes. Internet service provider problems so severe I could neither receive nor send mail. At other times I could not even get online, period. Messages erased, Newsletters wiped out. For quite awhile there I would get so upset, my dear husband would have to intervene and calm me down. I didn't want to listen to him, he didn't understand! But you see, he did understand. He was looking past the obvious while I was getting mired down in it. When I began to realize "who" was behind all this, I began to settle down. (So did most of the computer problems.) Our enemy knows what will upset us, and will use it against us with all his force. When that thing can no longer work against us, he will drop it. And go on to something else.

Watch for those things that send you into a tizzy. What is it that drains you? Depresses you? Realize what is behind these things, smile, say Thank You, Jesus, and go on. Ephesians 5:20—that most phenomenal verse—tells us to give thanks always FOR all things. Although it is very difficult in a lot of situations, we must follow that admonition. At first the words will be forced and stilted. Slowly they will begin to work themselves into our spirits, and we will begin to FEEL the thanks. From then on, things will be different. They will be different! Even if the situation does not change, YOU have changed! In those relationship problems when you have prayed and remained sweet and honest....thank Him. And enjoy the change.

In Your Loneliness

While I am addressing women in leadership positions, I want to mention the problem of loneliness. The called woman is a lonely woman. Loneliness is part of the lot for a leader, male or female. The higher one goes, the lonelier it gets. But, with few exceptions, it is lonelier for a woman than for a man. Men have each other. The woman usually stands alone.

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Too many people make leadership a competition, but women should not try to compete with men. There is so much work to do that there is plenty to go around for everybody. The main thing, as T.F. Tenney says, is to keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing is to make sure our spirit stays sweet and our attitude right. The woman leader should not put on boxing gloves, but stay feminine.

If you are a woman God has called to leadership, He did so knowing you were female. You do not have to act like a man. Enjoy your work. Enjoy your femininity! Enjoy the company of other women leaders. Get involved in a network; do not hesitate to pick up the phone and call somebody when you need to. Women in the ministry now have something really wonderful: The Ministerial Alliance of Women Preachers. Here we get together at least once a year for a conference, and it is so uplifting. We all need something like that in our lives. Search until you find one just right for you.

Let go and let God work. Let Him have His way. Allow the Lord to work, to use whomsoever He will. He alone knows who is best equipped for a particular task. Do not quench the Spirit. Have revival by letting God move freely without getting in His way. Stay close to God. Stay sweet. Take all your complaints to Him.

God bless you,
Your friend,
Lynda Allison Doty

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