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Praise the Lord, Ladies! All I can say, is that this year is getting away from us so fast! Here it is, February. This is the month when people give valentines cards and gifts and candy, expressing their love one to another. I will be getting something from my special husband, as a token—a reminder—of how much I mean to him. I am so thankful for this husband that God has provided for me. After 22 years of being single, it was quite a change having someone around all the time—someone to share my life and work. Praise the Lord! God knew it would take a patient man...a gentle and compassionate man...to "tame" this lady. And that's what He sent to me.

A Valentine Story

A few years ago when I still lived in California, my best friend was a retired missionary who was also single. We enjoyed going places together, to the conferences, campmeetings, and just visiting and praying together. She lived in a little town only 16 miles from me, so we were able to get together frequently. Having labored in India, Japan, and Pakistan, she could cook up some unusual and spicy dishes. Many were the times when we would sit down together in her little apartment to share a meal.

The Lord impressed upon her to write her life story, and to have me help her write it. And so we did. Right after we completed the manuscript, she turned 70. The next week she met the man she was at last going to marry. The next month, they were married in a beautiful ceremony and I had the privilege of being her matron-of-honor. What a joyous day that was! Married for the very first time at age 70! She had been faithful to God, remained pure in life and in body, and God—when the time was right—rewarded her with a wonderful minister—like my husband now, patient and longsuffering!

I thought her story would make a nice Valentine's story, but in addition to that, it shows us that God does not forget us. He does not forget where we are, nor does He lose sight of the desires of our heart. God hurts when we hurt, and He rejoices when we rejoice. That's what the Bible instructs us to do for others. He longs to give us the desires of our heart.

Psalm 37

Delicacies. He wants to give us the things we need, but also our desires. We read Psalm 37:4 and get excited about receiving the desires of our heart. Too often we blithely try to claim that promise, and then we wonder why His promise has failed us. We wonder why—when His Word says He'll give us our desires—do we not see them come to pass in our own lives. Once, when reading about God bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land, I was struck by the description of a land flowing with milk and honey. Hmm...why, I wondered, would the Lord promise that particular combination? Milk, I could understand. Milk is a staple—a very necessary thing in their lives. But honey—why did God promise them honey? I believe it was because God was showing them—and us, reading these words thousands of years later—that not only does He want to provide us with the necessities of life, but also with the

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However, when we read Psalm 37:4, we see that something very important precedes our receiving the desires of our heart. First, we must delight ourselves in Him. That is one thing my friend Frances did. She was always praising Him and loving Him and trusting Him.

Let's look at Psalm 37 together. We receive some wonderful instruction in the first few verses that, if we practice, we shall find peace and rest for our souls.

First, we are not to fret (verse 1). We are not to worry, to be annoyed, and to be concerned about. This scripture particularly mentions evildoers. Too often we see people get away with things and it really can rub us the wrong way. We can get an attitude if we don't watch it. The word fret is used several times in this chapter.

Verse 3 tells us to trust in the Lord and do good. Verse 4—delight in Him. Verse 5, commit our way unto Him. Verse 7, Rest in Him and wait patiently for Him. I would like for you to continue to read all 40 verses of this precious Psalm. If you are disturbed by something that is going on in your life and environment—especially people who aren't doing right—take heart. Continue to trust God and to do good. Watch your attitude. Stay sweet. Pray and look to God, for verse 37 tells us that the result shall be peace.

In these troubled times, peace is of the utmost importance. Look around you at all the needs! It's like the world has gone crazy. We desperately need God's peace. It comes from obedience to Him and His Word. Obedience...means doing what we are told to do. The Word says Trust; we are to trust. The Word says delight ourselves in Him; we are to take joy in the worship of our King. The Word says we can have what we pray for when we abide in Him; we must abide in Him and believe we have it. Obedience is doing those things that please God. Look at this—

It is not pleasing to Him for us to be depressed and fearful. It is not pleasing to Him for us to worry. We are to cast our cares on Him. Sadness, oppression are not pleasing to Him. God loves a cheerful giver—God loves cheerfulness, period. Cheerful attitudes. Try going through the Bible sometime and counting the times He tells us to cheer up. Fear not. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The Joy of the Lord is our Strength

Something else is needful and that is joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength! It is our strength! When we feel weak and ineffective, could it be that our joy is dimmed?

John 15 talks about abiding in Him. His very life and power flow from Him and into us, like the life from the vine into the branches. The branches cannot bear fruit without the vine. That's pure and simple. If we think we can do anything apart from Him we have another thought coming. We often fancy that we can—especially His work! How many of us actually labor in His Kingdom in our own strength! Think about it. When things come too hard...when we don't see the results we should...when we don't see the souls saved...think about it. Are we laboring under our own steam? I have done this often because the very talents and gifts He has given me have oftentimes proven to be a liability in this respect. I

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have found myself relying upon them more, and upon Him less. We need to watch this carefully. We are not responsible for the results—He is. We are not the Savior—He is. As we learn to rely on Him, from Whom cometh our power and strength, we will find doing His work more pleasant, more fruitful, and less of a struggle. Oh ye of little faith! He wants us to have joy—His joy! He wants us to be overflowing with His joy. Do you believe that? Do you believe Jesus when He tells us this in John 15:11, *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."*

I believe the Lord truly is calling us to joy. Without it, we will wander in ineffectiveness. We will be stifled by the cares of this life. Intercessors, especially, beware! So many intercessors I know are depressed. God lays burdens on them and they pray and intercede, but this they also do—they carry the burdens away from the prayer room with them. As they go about their daily business, they mull over the problem, the pain that belongs to someone else. They did not leave it with Jesus at the altar and, as a result, they become depressed and oppressed. This ought not to be! Leave God's burdens with God, dear one! When He gives us a burden, it's because He intends to act. He just needs someone to pray the answer into existence. Rejoice, therefore! Be strong in the Lord and rejoice!

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

As we go deeper into this year, with all the things that lie on the horizon, we will need strength more than ever before. We don't know how bad the effects of Y2K will be but, between now and then, let us begin to prepare ourselves for—whatever. We are living in perilous times, to be sure, but they are also exciting times. Look up, precious one, lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh!

God bless you,
Your friend,
Lynda Allison Doty

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