

*A Woman's Place Ministries
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Brother Doty and I are still supremely busy. I am maintaining just about the same schedule I had while living in Nebraska—plus everything else I'm doing here in Sacramento. So it has a way of keeping one busy. But we are also very happy here. We have a little swimming pool, a lovely atrium with waterfall in our home, and two extremely happy "fat cats." Plus new friends galore and the most awesome church ever. "The Rock Church" is growing by leaps and bounds and always something exciting happening. If you are ever in the Sacramento area, please stop and visit!

We are in the middle of trying to plan a trip for August—an actual "vacation." We realized in our four years of marriage we have never had a real vacation, so it looks like things might work out for us to go back to Maine—and on to New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. We are fans of "Anne of Green Gables," so look forward to that! We are praying about it—and think it would be really neat if God does work it out for us!

Think About Our Choices

We can start our day off with the right choices. We can choose our feelings before we even get out of bed. When you wake up in the morning and sit up in the bed, and you say, "Good morning Jesus, I am going to be happy today." Begin to tell yourself that before you let your little dainty toe touch the floor. "I am going to be happy today." I have awakened in the mornings feeling very sad and depressed. You have, too. What we do with those feelings is important. We can choose to get up and hope we'll feel better later, and move into our day with sadness. Or we can make the conscious choice of will: "I refused this depression. I choose, instead, to be happy for Jesus." And begin to name the reasons we have to rejoice.

Throughout the day, we will be confronted with choices and decisions. Pray before each one. Take yourself off of Automatic Pilot. With each wise choice you make, you will become wiser still. You will grow in your confidence to make the right decisions. Keep it moment-by-moment, choice-by-choice.

A Word on "Standards"

In John 16:13 Jesus says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." If you have the Holy Ghost, then you have the Spirit of truth living in you. The Bible says He will shine light like a candle inside of us. That Spirit of truth living in us will say, "Honey, I don't like what you are doing. I'm not pleased with that. I want to see you change that. I want to see you stop doing it." That is the Spirit of truth when it begins to speak to us.

So when we allow God to come in and to shine that light into the dark corners of our hearts, and to hearken unto Him, and obey when He says, "Stop doing it, Honey, no more. No more lying. No more telling little white lies. Honey, that little white lie will keep you out of

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heaven as much as anything else. I'm not pleased with it." That is the Spirit of truth. He will do it for us.

He has biblical standards for all of His children, and He also has specific standards for individuals. They are high standards. There are standards that He wants just for *you*. Sometimes the standards might be different from somebody else's standards. For example, after a really good service, sometimes God is calling you to just go to the altar and spend some time with Him. Everybody else is going out to Denny's, but God is telling you, "I want you to linger awhile, and just be at the altar with me." It might be perfectly okay for everybody else to go. There is nothing wrong with good fellowship after service. What is wrong is when God asks us to do something specific and we disobey. Then that becomes sin.

It is wrong to blame the church or the pastor when other people are critical of our standards. It is important that we are obedient, that we should obey the Word of God and abide by our pastor's standards for the local church. But far more important than mere obedience is getting it deep into our own heart, so that we can obey from a heart of love.

I remember so well having my own personal Gethsemane regarding standards. For a number of years I had merely obeyed the rules and regulations of my pastors. I did the things I was supposed to do, dressed the way everybody else did, sported uncut hair and long skirts, and did not say certain words. But the day came when I was of necessity in a church that did not have the same kind of standards. It was at that point that I had to dig it out for myself. Did I want to retain the standards I had been raised with and be different from everybody else in my new church? Or did I want to let go of the old ways and be like everyone else? After all, I could reason, they were "in the truth," too. They were all born again Christians, so what would be the harm to let down a little bit?

And so I went to God, and His Word, and studied and prayed and dug it out for myself. When the dust settled, I found that I was a stranger in this new land, because I chose to retain the old standards. I chose them because they were what God wanted for me and, thus, what I wanted to do for God. No longer was I obeying rules to please a man; I was living to please the Lord.

Until we reach that point, we are apt to communicate the wrong message to the lost. When they say things like, "Why don't you cut your hair and put it into a nice style?" we no longer answer with things like, "I'm not allowed to cut my hair." Now we say, "I am pleasing my God by doing the things He likes."

(© From upcoming new book by Sister Doty, **MAXIMUM VICTORY**, to be released late summer 2001.)

God bless you,
Your friend,
Lynda Allison Doty

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