

*A Woman's Place Ministries
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Note: Sister Doty will be in California (Los Angeles and Fresno areas) November 12-22...Rolla, Missouri, November 25-27.

MEMORIES

"...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:

A lot of people begin having memories this time of year, and not all of them good. The holiday season is approaching and, try as we might to be thankful on that special Day, many of us end up depressed. Childhood memories of long ago flood our minds, and so many of those memories are hurtful. The same for Christmas. Statistics tell us more people commit suicide during these two holidays than at any other time.

Women, especially, who have a background of abuse and hurt, find themselves wishing the holidays away. Family times are not happy. They bring back memories of hurt. What do we do with memories? How do we handle them?

People who have read my latest book, WALKING IN TRUST, know about how my children and I were expelled from the New Age movement and sent into "exile." We were homeless and without direction. In desperation, we went back to my birthplace, thinking it might be the one place that would welcome us. Thanksgiving came during this time period, and the kids and I had nowhere to go. My mother had told us not to come there, and we had no money. The lady we were staying with at the time, an old friend, had plans for the holiday and would be out of town. We needed to be out of her house while she was gone. She gave us \$20 and sent us on our way.

I will never forget how the kids and I finally found a truck stop that was open and serving turkey and all the trimmings. That is where we spent Thanksgiving that year. Afterwards, we had to while away the time, waiting for our friend to return home.

At our house, holidays always meant plenty of alcohol. That meant there was going to be violence of some kind or another. I think, though, that even worse than the violence was my mother's tears. She would get all sentimental and begin to re-live her own memories. We all had to ache with her. As she descended into depression, the rest of us had to share in her sorrows. I soon learned to dread all of the holidays.

But Thanksgiving has come to be special to me. When God gave me the Holy Ghost, He brought me out of a horrible, horrible pit. He delivered me from my destructions (Psalm 107:20). I have had to learn to focus on that. We have to learn to give our ugly memories to God. I had a woman ask me as we prayed together: "But how do I give it to Him?" In worship. I told her to begin to worship. At first she found it very difficult to worship God

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because she was hurting so bad. But I continued to encourage her to focus her thoughts in on HER God, and to worship HER God, and to give to Him all her pain and dark memories. "I can't handle it any more, Lord Jesus—but You can! Here it is, Jesus, here it is! Take it from me, it's too much!"

As she began to focus on Him and all His goodness—and especially all His POWER—she began to worship Him more and more. She began to slip into a deeper level of worship, and soon the tears were flowing, and healing was taking place.

Memories. Paul gives us excellent advice in our key verse. But, Sister Doty, I can't do that. I just can't forget it, I can't put it all behind me. Paul had a lot to forget. And he had to forgive himself. All the pain and destruction he had caused God's children. Yet Paul knew he had been called, and that God had given him much work to do. And so Paul—by an effort of his will—mortified his flesh and forced himself to concentrate on God and God alone. God's work. God's calling. God's plan. God's purpose.

And so must we. The devil knows our pasts. He knows how to bring sadness to our mind and to whisper words of depression and sorrow. But we must learn NOT to listen to him, but to listen instead to the wonderful words of Life that our Lord died to give to us. You see, somewhere along the way, we have to reach the place where we refuse all the garbage that the adversary speaks to us. Only as we know the Word of God can we know truth from lies. And now is the time to stop listening—and believing—all the lies.

We can do it, ladies! We can, we can! We can do all things—ALL things!—through Him!

Have a happy holiday— Spend it in thanksgiving for all that Jesus has done for you. I love you in Him.

God bless you,
Your friend,
Lynda Allison Doty

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