



Women In Touch

A Quarterly Publication of Autumn Ridge Church Women's Ministry

Inside This Issue:

Land of the Free
.....Pg. 2

Special Freedom
Devotional Study
.....Pg. 3

Two Women's Ministry
Events You Don't Want
to Miss
..... Pg. 4

Women in Touch
newsletter is created by
and for the women of
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Under Fire

The faith and prayers of a mother with a son under fire

God receives all the glory for my recent remarriage to my husband after 24 years of separation. But this story is about our son, Daniel.

Daniel was born at Olmsted Community Hospital in April 1985. He was very young when the marriage of my husband and I started to tear apart.

After the separation, my son Daniel and I moved to Switzerland where I had grown up. We are of Jewish heritage and felt as though we were following the footsteps of the "wandering Jew" before we finally immigrated to Israel in 1999. However, Daniel's journey brought him back to a small town in Minnesota where he lived with a pastor's family until he finished high school. He was an angry rebellious young man, but the Lord encountered him and he returned to Israel to enlist in the Israel Defense Force. He wanted to be a fighter in one of the toughest elite units—the GOLANI Brigade—and against many odds, he succeeded.

Then came the summer of 2006, and the north of Israel came under fire from Hezbollah terrorists shooting from southern Lebanon. Before Daniel crossed the border he called me one last time and said, "Mom, don't worry about my face!" My mind started racing as I asked him, "What happened to your face?" He had backslid—since he entered the army so I was surprised when he replied, "Not face, faith. If I don't come back, we'll meet up later!" I could hardly hold my tears as I understood that he was again trusting God to keep and sustain Him.

Although I had resisted him getting a tattoo for years, I was suddenly glad that

Daniel had two large angels on his lower back with their wings spread over his name.

During the short, but intense 2nd Lebanon War, Psalm 91:11 became my daily strength and comfort: "For He will command His angels concerning [Daniel] to guard [Daniel] in all [his] ways. I held onto the entire Psalm, and inserted Daniel's name whenever I could.



[Daniel] will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day." V. 14 "Because [Daniel] loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue [Daniel]." "I will protect [Daniel]."

The rabbis of Israel called on the entire nation to pray the psalms and give thanks to God for all miracles.

When I saw Daniel again, he had no doubt that it was God who protected him. He had seen so many miracles. I know that I am one of the blessed mothers whose son served in a fighter unit in hostile territory without harm or death to any of his immediate unit. God receives all the thanks and the glory.

Written and told by Tina. Last names have been excluded for the protection of the family.

Land of the Free

By Andi Koens

I have never stepped foot on foreign soil.

I was born into a culture perverted by materialism in a war of haves and have nots. I live in a land of freedom. A land where freedom means we can do as we please. We are free to eat what we want and do what we want with our bodies because it feels good to us and makes us happy. One nation under God? I am afraid that if I lift the blinders, I see that our culture is easily slipping towards a nation above God. We have a tendency to idolize ourselves and use the laws of the LORD, the very laws this nation was founded upon, as a doormat under our feet. A culture that says, "There is no regard for anyone but me and my best interest." We are consumed with lust and greed, money and power, sex and addictions. There is no choice but MY choice. We believe those choices shouldn't have repercussions.

This is not what freedom is about, yet it is this America our brave return to call home; a land millions have sacrificed their lives for. The most valuable gift from liberty lies not in selfish gain, but in our ability to publicly name ourselves followers of Jesus Christ. He is the reason we live and move and breathe.



The price of freedom

As I reflect on this thought, I challenge myself to remember the high price that bought our freedoms. I can call myself a free citizen of the United States of America because of the death of many, of whose blood stripes our flag. Likewise, I name myself a follower of Christ because my Heavenly Father loved me enough to sacrifice the life of His Son so I can be free from the bondage of sin. By His stripes we are healed. Perhaps, if we live being mindful that we are debtors, then we won't take our liberties for granted. We won't act like freedom is something we ourselves have earned. Freedom is a privilege. Freedom is a result of unmerited favor toward us.

Freedom isn't free.

In the middle of the night, while others are peacefully asleep, those who don camouflage with boldness, rise to board an airplane to meet an uncertain foe...an uncertain fate. They leave the familiar for the unfamiliar as they fly into the valley of the shadow of death. Selfishness is replaced with selflessness.

None but God have seen what their eyes have seen, heard what their ears have heard or experienced or felt the way they have. It is to those our freedoms are indebted. Thank you for these men and women who face these odds to defend our freedom, a liberty that came with a price. They are the brave and this is their home.

“The most valuable gift from liberty lies not in selfish gain, but in our ability to publicly name ourselves followers of Jesus Christ.”

—Andi Koens

Freedom's Triad: A Devotional Study

By Jacqui Stahl

***"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* Galatians 5:1**

One of the hardest aspects of parenting is consistent training of boundaries. When our first was a toddler she loved to explore. I couldn't leave her alone outside for fear that she would wander off into the woods or cross the street to a neighbors' yard. I recognized I could either train her to learn the boundaries or fence in the yard. I quickly realized the easier of the two choices was to put up a fence!

But the reality is a fence would have only appeased me rather than helped her or any of our other children learn to find freedom in which to safely roam. Training didn't just happen overnight; but each child eventually gained knowledge of the boundaries, learned obedience, and demonstrated levels of responsibility and thereby earned greater privileges. After receiving salvation through Christ, I've learned this triad of knowledge, obedience, and responsibility is required for growing spiritual freedom in my life, too.

Like children, I first need to learn the boundaries of safety in which I can live a life pleasing to God. The Greek word for freedom in Galatians 5:1 is '*eleutheria*' and means to find true liberty by living as we should, not as we please. In order to live as I should, I need to know how God wants me to live. You and I need to be in the Word regularly to acquire knowledge of God's moral, spiritual, and relational boundaries for living a holy life.

The Bible also makes it clear I can't just gain knowledge about these standards; I need to heed them. As James writes, "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says...the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.*" (James 1:22-25) As long as we put into practice and obey the boundaries of righteousness set forth by God, we will find blessings of peace, joy, and fulfillment in this life. But when we wander outside of God's boundaries, we fall under the curse of sin, its consequences, and the yoke of slavery Paul refers to in Galatians 5. I am afraid I must admit the latter happens more than it should in my own life.

After gaining knowledge of the boundaries and choosing to obey them, I must then demonstrate responsibility with my freedom. Our freedom in Christ is not a ticket for practicing cheap grace - a grace from God that is devalued by our actions and in which we expect to receive forgiveness while we intentionally sin. Rather we are to use our freedom to proclaim the gospel message of salvation and advance the Kingdom of God on earth. Everything we do should be done to the glory of God. (Col. 3:23)

As daughters of the King, you and I have the privilege of being ambassadors for Christ by walking daily according to the liberty we have obtained through the righteousness of His blood. We must base decisions and deeds on obedience to His holy standard. We need to make evident our spiritual freedom by determining to live a life pleasing to the Father, not indulging in sin. In doing so, we will realize the full measure of the truth spoken in John 8:36, "*So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!*"

Father God, thank you for rescuing me from slavery and setting me free through the blood of Christ. Let me not forget what is required of this freedom – knowledge, obedience, and responsibility - so that I may live a life that is pleasing to you even in the midst of adversity and temptation. Help me attain the freedom which is found in Christ alone. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Reflections

What are some ways you deceive yourself (or your children deceive you) when it comes to obeying?

Do you think God's consequences are sometimes too harsh or too lenient for our disobedience? Why?

How are you using your freedom in Christ to advance the Gospel?



Meditations

"For in him we live and move and have our being..."

-Acts 17:28a

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."

-Romans 6:22

Observations

List some current standards - or lack of standards – the world expects. Now list some specific passages in the Bible where God provides a standard or boundary we should know in order to live as his daughters. (For example, the 10 Commandments are found in Exodus 20)

Special Women's Ministry Events You Don't Want to Miss

Women of Faith: "Over the Top"

October 21-22, 2010

"Have you ever come on anything quite like this extravagant generosity of God...?" Romans 11:33 (MSG).



God's extravagant generosity and love for us will be the focus of this year's Women of Faith conference. Whether you have attended numerous Women of Faith (WOF) conferences or this is your first one, I am confident it will be one you will long remember. Why do I think so? This past January, I had the opportunity to see a preview of the conference at a Women of Faith event for group leaders in Dallas. At the event, group leaders were able to meet many of the WOF speakers and musicians and hear excerpts from their messages. I came home with a new excitement to bring many women to the conference in St. Paul so they could experience the same biblical teaching, life lessons and encouragement that I just had.

All of us who have attended Women of Faith conferences in the past have our favorite speakers. A favorite of many is **Patsy Clairmont**. Her humor and life stories will leave you both laughing and crying. The "Over the Top" Friday day session will feature Patsy along with a new member of the team, storyteller Andy Andrews. Through stories, Andy teaches valuable life lessons and practical advice. Also returning to St. Paul are favorites Marilyn Meberg, **Sandi Patty**, and Nicole Johnson. Marilyn is a strong Bible teacher who uses her wisdom and humor to encourage women. Nicole is a dramatist who will take you to the very depths of your heart as she addresses issues many women face whether single, married, young or old. Sandy will lead your heart to the very throne of God as she sings powerful hymns and songs of praise. New in the last few years to Women of Faith but not new to many of us are comedian Anita Renfro and former "Facts of Life" star Lisa Whelchel. It's hard to find someone who can make you laugh harder than Anita. Lisa loves to share about the Author of her story who took her from being just a TV star to being a real woman of faith. Special musical guests this year are **Steven Curtis Chapman** and Mandisa. Joining Steven Curtis this year is his wife Mary Beth. Steven Curtis and Mary Beth will share about the tragic death of their five year old adopted daughter. Mandisa... you'll love her music and her heart.

The conference is called "Over the Top" for one other important reason...friendships. Spending time with our closest friends gives us a special joy. This may be your opportunity to attend the conference with a special friend or family member but it may also be an opportunity to meet a new special friend. We will join with women of faith from other churches in Rochester to attend the conference as a group. A special package has been designed which includes the tickets, hotel and bus transportation for the conference. A link on the home page of the Autumn Ridge website will take you to additional information about the package. So get away with your girlfriends for a spiritually refreshing weekend!

Questions about these special events? Contact Karen Rucker at (507) 281-5330 or women@autumnridgechurch.org.

Devoted Hearts 2011: For Such a Time as This

April 29-30, 2011

Anniversaries are a very special time. We often reflect on how God has blessed us through the years and look forward to the years ahead. On April 29-30, 2011 Devoted Hearts will be celebrating our fifth anniversary conference. It is for "such a time as this" that we are excited to announce that Kay Arthur will be the guest speaker. Many of you may be familiar with Kay, but for those who are not, let me tell you a little about her.

Kay's enthusiastic practical approach to the Biblical texts has drawn thousands to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Her renowned distinguishable Christian character, Bible teaching, inductive study books, and national radio and television programs continue to touch innumerable lives. Her life's passion is to establish people in God's Word and teach them to discover truth for themselves. In 2009, Kay's television program Precepts for Life was awarded the National Religious Broadcasters "Best TV Teaching Program" award. Kay's fervor for the Lord is driven by remembrance of her humble beginnings. She and her husband, Jack, serve as cofounders and co-CEO of Precept Ministries International.

Be sure to mark your calendar for April 29-30, 2011 and tell your friends about this special event held at Autumn Ridge Church. Oh, and who will be joining Kay for Devoted Hearts? All good celebrations have a few surprises so stay tuned for an exciting announcement about our musical guest in the next few months.



Kay Arthur: Guest Speaker