

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

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The Grand Lesson

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18). It is the apostle Paul who speaks so unequivocally to us, no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves. His words are not empty. He had endured hard work, imprisonments, floggings, exposure to death again and again, five times had received forty lashes minus one. He was beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked three times, had spent a night and a day in the open sea and was constantly on the move. He knew dangers from rivers, bandits, his own countrymen and Gentiles, dangers in the country, at sea, and from false brothers. He had labored and toiled, gone without sleep, suffered hunger, thirst, scant food, cold, and nakedness.

He boasted of things that showed his weakness, and perhaps the most ignominious experience of all was his having to be lowered over a wall in a basket—of all things!

Paul was no stranger to suffering. "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever," he said, "knows that I am not lying."

All of us have had some brush with suffering, at least if you accept my simple definition: *having what you don't want or wanting what you don't have.*

If you discover that the washing machine has just quit, you have what you don't want—a useless mechanism—but it is a mere "Oh no!" sort of thing which we would never dignify by using the word *suffering*.

If, however, you learn that someone has just filed a lawsuit against you, the "Oh no!" may be the beginning of many sorrows. You have what you don't want. Let us not fail to recognize that this is one of the many forms of suffering.

Suppose you have lost your job or your house. You suffer. If someone very dear to you has just died, you greatly miss what you no longer have.

Paul said, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it" (Rom. 8:18-20).

The apostle had received mysterious revelations. He had known a man caught up to paradise, but was not allowed to talk about it. He wanted no one to think more of him than was warranted. But the supreme test, that which seemed most likely to stagger the faithful apostle, was a very small thing indeed—a mere thorn.

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was *given* me a thorn in my flesh." What a gift!—a messenger of Satan himself, the archenemy of God, to torment the man. Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord to take it away. Had He done so, you and I would never have learned the grand lesson: *My grace is all you need, for power comes to its full strength in weakness* (2 Corinthians 12:9, New English Bible).

The Thorn

I stood a mendicant of God before His royal throne
And begged Him for one priceless gift that I could
call my own.

I took the gift from out His hand, but as I would
depart

I cried, 'But Lord! this is a thorn! and it has pierced
my heart.

This is a strange, a hurtful gift which Thou hast
given me.'

He said, 'My child, I give good gifts and gave My
best to thee.'

I took it home, and though at first the cruel thorn
hurt sore,

As long years passed I learned at last to love it more and more.

I learned He never gives a thorn without this added grace:

He takes the thorn to pin aside the veil that hides His face.

Martha Snell Nicholson

My Father's Remembrance of His Father

“When I was seven Father taught me to fish for bass in a beautiful lake in Maine. He gave me a hand line, and when I hooked a fish I got so excited that I tangled the line as I pulled it in. Finally, I handed it over to Father and he managed, as always, to straighten it out. Often since I have been reminded that, if I will only turn over my problems to my heavenly Father and trust Him fully, He can undo tangles.

“I remember how, when I was still a small boy and sometimes could not go to sleep at night, Father would sit beside me, stroking my hand, and singing softly, ‘Hide me, O my Savior, hide me.’ Once in camp when I tripped over a root and fell with my hand in the fire, Father sat up almost all night fanning and blowing on the blistered hand until we could get medical help in the morning.

“When we were Boy Scouts, Father sometimes would go camping with us. In the prime of life he was rugged and strong, and would gladly carry his own pack, sleep on a rough bed, and put up with the cold and poorly cooked food just in order to be with us in our recreation, He could stand more cold than most city men and would seldom wear an overcoat.

“We had many wonderful summers together at Gale Cottage in Franconia, New Hampshire. Father taught me to fly fish for trout in Profile Lake, just below the Great Stone Face (also known as The Old Man of the Mountain) and often we fished the lakes and streams together. Even here he was unselfish and a real sportsman. He would let me fish the pools first as we waded along the brooks, and always wanted to land his own trout with the net, taking his chances on losing it. While we were camping one night beside a mountain lake, after a downpour, some rough, swearing men came to spend the night at the same spot. Before going to bed, Father, as his custom was, wanted

to have brief Bible reading and prayer, and, to their surprise and chagrin, he invited these men to join us.

“Father rarely complained and was never cynical. He did not like to hear us say, ‘It’s too good to be true,’ but said, ‘It’s so good it must be true.’ When I failed in one course in high school, he talked seriously and kindly with me, and encouraged me to do better; with the result that I made a good record in the last two years of high school and at the university. He always told me that if I would prepare myself carefully, I should never lack opportunities for work.

“Father was debonair—genial, kind, cheerful, and with a keen sense of humor. He was the soul of tact and courtesy and most sympathetic. As I write, his smiling face looks down at me from one of his last photographs. He never ‘took a bad picture,’ and I think it was because his heart was right and his thoughts were on a high plane.

“Of many passages of Scripture that he gave me, two stand out in my memory. One night, as I was sitting on the edge of his bed, talking of my troubles and temptations, he laid his hand on mine and reminded me of the Lord’s words to Peter: ‘Simon, Simon—Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ (Luke 22:31,32).

“To encourage me in my Christian work, he referred more than once to the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples: ‘Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit’ (John 15:16).”

[A postscript from Elisabeth: My dear Grandfather, Philip E. Howard, became blind in his old age. Whenever I would visit him he would ask me to play hymns on the piano. He would draw up a chair close beside me and lay his gnarled old hands very lightly on mine as I played. Usually I would find him quietly singing and sometimes weeping. He loved us all more than he could find words to express.)

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The Presence of the Holy Spirit

“In all places and at all times, we can have with us the Comforter. There may be through the day a constant interchange of private words, of little offerings, too small to have any name attached to them—by which the bonds of that familiar friendship grow closer and more real, until it comes to that special personal intimacy which we call sanctity.”

Janet Erskine Stuart

How to Be a Good Mother-in-Law

1. Thank God for this acquired son or daughter.
2. Treat this man and woman as adults with adult responsibility.
3. Remember your daughter or son now belongs to her/his spouse.
4. Allow them to form a new family—it's theirs, not yours now!
5. Expect this new entity to be different from you and your family.
6. Let the newly formed family do things its own way.
7. Do not dish out gratuitous advice (which is what I'm doing now!)
8. Pray for them daily.
9. Never criticize the “in-law” to his/her spouse.
10. Encourage them in every way you can think of.

Holy Confidence

“Go on in all simplicity; do not be so anxious to win a quiet mind, and it will be all the quieter. Do not examine so closely into the progress of your soul. Do not crave so much to be perfect, but let your spiritual life be formed by your duties, and by the actions which are called forth by circumstances. Do not take overmuch thought for tomorrow. God, who has led you safely on so far, will lead you on to the end. Be altogether at rest in the loving holy confidence which you ought to have in His heavenly Providence.”

St. Francis deSales

The Mossyfoot Project

Our friend Betty Wagner of Wayfarers Ministries, Inc. has alerted us to the great need for socks, new or used, any color, thick or thin, for patients in Ethiopia who are suffering from a disease called Mossyfoot, which comes from going barefoot. Pictures show hideously swollen feet, some with small warty nodules, others which remind one of elephants' feet. If socks are new, it is best to wash them. Shipping address: Dr. Kelemu Desta, P.O. Box 131, Sodda, Wolaitta, Ethiopia. Send by parcel post, surface, four pounds or less. On the little green customs label write “Socks for Patients.” Check the place “Gift” and “0” for Value.

So far sixteen patients have been taught to make shoes. They can carry on the trade in their villages. Each one needs a set of tools, which costs \$410. As possible, tools and leather are being supplied and subsidized. It is planned to have a rotating stock of leather. Surgery runs about \$100 per patient, and now all are being cured. Thank you for helping and praying.

Hymn for Grace at Table

(tune: Sun of My Soul)

We give Thee thanks with grateful hearts.
Grant that the strength this food imparts
Be only used to do Thy will;
Thy pleasure, Lord, in us fulfil.

A Visit to Turkey

Last February, Lars and I had the great privilege of going to Turkey to speak to a group of American women called PWOC, Protestant Women of the Chapel. Some were single women in the military, most were the wives of military men. Our hotel was not far from Ephesus, a vast and fascinating ruin which took us back to the tremendous riot that took place when the silversmiths discovered that “this fellow Paul” (see Acts 19:26) was leading away large numbers of people. Their trade was at stake, as was “the divine majesty” of the goddess Artemis. The whole city was in an uproar, everyone shouting

“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” They rushed into The Theatre, most of them not even knowing why they were there. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd but the disciples would not let him. When the mob discovered that Paul was a Jew they shouted in unison for about two hours.

The Theatre could accommodate twenty-five thousand people. Our group of two hundred or so asked me to speak briefly from the stone proscenium. I read a short part of Ephesians 1, “For (God) chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. . . . In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.” Lars had climbed to the top of The Theatre and reported that he was able to hear every word, though I had spoken in a normal voice.

The Ten Commandments in Verse

Above all else love God alone;
Bow down to neither wood nor stone.
God’s name refuse to take in vain;
The Sabbath rest with care maintain.
Respect your parents all your days;
Hold sacred human life always.
Be loyal to your chosen mate;

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Travel Schedule September–November 2000

September Book tour in Germany

October 5 Irvington, N.J., Gateway Pregnancy Centers, (973)399-8378.

October 7, 8 New York City, Times Square Church, Lisa McLaughlin, (212)541-6300.

November 3 Azusa, Calif., Azusa Pacific University, Daren Bachman, (626)969-3434.

November 3, 4 San Clemente, Calif., Pacific Coast Church, Carlynn Sabarez, (949)366-9423.

November 25–December 2 Willowbank, Bermuda, (441) 234-1616.

Steal nothing neither small nor great.

Report, with truth, your neighbor’s deed;

And rid your mind of selfish greed.

From a McGuffey *Reader*

Note from Lars—Greeting Cards

From September 1999 to September 2000, we offered sets of the Dayspring Elisabeth Elliot All-Occasion greeting cards to newsletter subscribers as a subscription renewal premium. I have more of them for those who want some. You may order directly from me (not from the Newsletter): Lars Gren, 10 Strawberry Cove, Magnolia, MA . If you order through me, a set of three cards costs \$6.00 (postage included). The retail price of these cards is \$8.75.

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