

# The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

July / August 1990

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## Spiritual Opposition

When Lars and I returned from a fortnight in Scotland and England there was the expected pile-up of work awaiting us, and the usual temptation to feel overwhelmed by it. The suitcase had to be unpacked, clothes washed, mail opened, read, and answered. The house had been partially cleaned by the student who lives with us, but upstairs I had to deal with the dust. There were phone messages waiting, and phone calls we needed to make to family members. Do you know the feeling of utter inadequacy to cope? I'm sure you do. But I believe the enemy of our souls is specially alert at such times, seeking to use them to turn us in on ourselves rather than upwards to the One who stands ready to be our Refuge and Helper.

Laying all the work before the Lord on the first morning after our return, I asked for His help to do it faithfully, carefully, and in an orderly way. I believe He answered that prayer—I'm sure He did. Everything that had to be done in those first three days was done, and I couldn't possibly have done it on my own. Then there was the lovely respite of Sunday, with time to read and think. I looked forward to tackling Monday's work (radio talks, scheduling of speaking) at a clean desk.

Monday came. The day was committed to God as always. But I felt like the wheels of the Egyptian chariots which "drave heavily." There were interruptions, distractions. I could not get on as expected. My mind was dull, confused. At the end of the day I could not see what I had done with my time. It is late Tuesday afternoon now, and I had thought I could write the leader for the Newsletter this morning. Where did those hours go? I took my usual walk after lunch around Ocean Drive—a cloudless sky, a glittering sea, I walked alone today, talking to God about my failures, asking Him to clarify things, help me to know what His word was to be for you. Such an unexpected source of help came to hand—a letter written to my father thirty years

ago by an old missionary. Things were not going well at that time with the paper, *The Sunday School Times*, of which my father was editor, and he was on the verge of what was then called a nervous breakdown. He had asked counsel of this old veteran, E.L. Langston, in Africa.

"The devil does not like that paper nor its articles, and is evidently attacking you in your inmost heart, not causing you to doubt so much as causing a spirit of discontent. Fortunately we both know that temptation is not sin, it is yielding to temptation that causes us to sin and I feel that you must count it joy that you are passing through these times of difficulty, for they are sure signs that the Lord is blessing you...."

"There is another reason, I think, for the cause of the feeling within us. It comes from the flesh and self-introspection. It is good for us to look at self and know how loathsome it is, but with one look at self we must take ten looks at Christ...."

"No one goes to church more than the devil does, and no one appears as an angel of light as he does. We are in the thick of facing powers of darkness who are determined to rob us of Him and rob God of us, and you and I, my brother, have just got to hope in Christ and rely on Him for His Spirit to direct our thoughts, our ways, and our works so that it is not us but Christ in us."

Wasn't it wonderful that that letter had been preserved so that I "chanced upon it" in the hour of my need? But that is so like the Lord, for it is through the tender austerity of our very troubles that the Son of Man comes knocking. In every event He seeks an entrance to my heart, yes, even in my most helpless, futile, fruitless moments. The very cracks and empty crannies of my life, my perplexities and hurts and botched-up jobs, He wants to fill with Himself, His joy, His life. The more unsatisfactory my "performance," the more He calls me to share His yoke (I should know by now that mine makes me tired and overburdened), and to learn of Him ("I am gentle and humble in heart").

## A Little Courtesy Won't Kill You

A young man writes, "From a man's point of view, I don't mind telling a date she looks really nice and opening doors for her. But I would like to be told that I look nice—and it does not hurt to say thank you. A few years ago while I was going to Bible college I opened a door for two girls. Neither said thank you. One started talking to the other about how rude the guys here at college were."

My old friend Dorothy Collins, now with the Lord, used often to talk to me about the importance of truth. It's fashionable now to unload one's negative feelings on people; it is called honesty, and it often disguises a deep dishonesty about ourselves before God. Dorothy believed in coming straight out with an honest compliment, to a friend, to the mailman, to the waitress. "Tell them now, Betty dear. Don't wait till they're dead." It's wonderful what that kind of truth can do for one's spirits, isn't it?

THANKS to Leila Pare of La Salle, Ontario, for furnishing the author of "Sleep Sweetly" which appeared in the January issue. "Anon." turns out to be Ellen M. Huntington.

## A Modern Jericho

A friend in eastern Europe writes, "Many do not know that the collapse of the Wall was preceded by prayer marches led by the pastor of the Lutheran Church in Leipsig...freedom marches were organized and every week after a prayer meeting which included specific prayer for the tearing down of the Wall, the believers marched through the city. Following the seventh march, guess what happened. The next day the announcement was made that the Wall was to be torn down. The book of Joshua, anyone?"

## Valerie's Homeschooling

A number have written to ask about my daughter Valerie's homeschooling. She has as little time to write

letters as most mothers, so I asked her to write one for all inquirers, telling how she goes about it. If you'd like a copy, send me (not to the Newsletter, please) a self-addressed, stamped envelope: 10 Strawberry Cove, Magnolia MA 01930.

## Taking Care of My Little Sister

(Reprinted by permission from *The Home Sweet Home Newspaper of the Shepard Family*, Vol. I, No.1. The writer is my granddaughter, Christiana, age eight.)

"Last night my mother and father were gone and I had to put Evangeline\* down for bed. My mom had put on her diapers and I had to put on her pajamas. This is how it started. I put Evangeline on Colleen's bed and I said, 'Evangeline, stay here!' and of course she went off the bed, crawled down the stairs, and of course I went after her and said, 'Evangeline, come here!' Finally I got her and put her on the kitchen table and put her pajamas on and she saw her bottle on the kitchen counter and I gave it to her and took her back upstairs. Then I prayed with her and wound up the 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing' music box and said good night. Whew!"

\*[aged sixteen months when this was written]

## Use of Fetal Tissue in Finland

Dr. Pekka Reinikainen, in *Ethics and Medicine*, winter 1989, 5.3, reported on brain cell transplantation, using dead human fetuses to treat Alzheimer's dementia. Professor Urpo K. Rinne said that abortion techniques needed to be modified "so that better quality tissue could be obtained." Deeper research revealed that Finnish researchers had, beyond doubt, been involved in dubious research with *living* human fetuses. Eight human fetal heads, obtained by abdominal hysterectomy at 12-17 weeks' gestation, were perfused

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(forced, as a liquid) through the internal carotid arteries of eight human fetuses of approximately 10-23 weeks while the placenta remained in the uterus. "For *in vivo* experiments each fetus, immediately after removal from the uterus, was injected .... During this period the heart continued to beat and spontaneous movement was seen."

## A "Hard Time"

Following a talk I gave on what older women are to teach younger, according to Titus 2:3-5, someone raised this objection in the question period:

"I have a hard time with that verse about staying home."

It's an expression we often hear—"I have a hard time with that." Usually the tone is one of argument, and the words are a euphemism for "I don't like that," or "Surely that doesn't apply to my case." If the speaker were convinced that the verse did not apply to his case, he would not be having a hard time with it. He could dismiss it at once. But if the person really means he or she is having difficulty, what is the exact nature of the difficulty? I can think of four possibilities:

1. Does this apply to me?
2. I want to do it but I can't.
3. I ought to do it but I don't want to.
4. I wish God hadn't said it.

What shall we do with the difficulties? To the first I would say that if we come to God with an empty cup, asking Him to reveal His will and help us to do the right thing, no matter what it costs, He will certainly show us. For the second we have the promise, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." God never gave a command for which He will not supply the power to obey. For the third we know that we have been created with the will to choose. We may choose to do what we ought to do, and God will help us. If the last describes our "hard time" let's be straightforward with God, confess the truth, and submit to His Word as an obedient servant. Obedience always leads finally to *joy*.

## Correction About Two Books

Word had somehow gotten round that two books I had recommended are no longer available. It's not true. John

S.C. Abbott: *The Mother at Home* (on training children), and Elizabeth Prentiss: *Stepping Heavenward* (a diary, beginning at age 16, taking the woman through engagement, marriage, motherhood; a wonderfully helpful and practical chronicle of spiritual growth), may be obtained from G.A.M. Publications, PO Box 25, Sterling VA 22170. Special prices for Newsletter Readers: \$6.95 and \$10.95 respectively.

## Prayer

- For help in completion of two books I've been working on.
- For Alma Griffin who answers most of the mail that comes to my radio program, Gateway to Joy. She and her husband were missionaries for fourteen years in Nigeria. She is a nurse, mother of five, grandmother of ten. We both need divine wisdom to know how to help people with their appalling problems.

### Prayer

"When Thou rememberest what relates to me, think of me only in the light of Thy mercy—forget all else, O Thou, my injured and justly offended God, my unspeakably gracious Benefactor. Put out of sight all that has severed between me and Thee." (William Kay's note on Psalm 25:7)

## Question

"I struggle to please the Lord in my attitude. Yet I also want to be a wife and mother to a man of God. Are these two desires diametrically opposed?"

Only God knows whether marriage and motherhood are in His plan for you. Certainly your desire is not a sinful one. What matters is that you surrender all desires and hopes to God, asking that He choose for you what is best. The desire is not likely to evaporate. It is "brought into captivity" to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5) as you entrust it to Him.

## Keep in Touch

Are you moving? Getting married? Leaving school? *Don't forget to send us your change of address.* The post office DOES NOT FORWARD third class mail like the Newsletter. *Please remove your address label below and send it with your new address to:* The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, Post Office Box 7711, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

## *Travel Schedule* *July - September, 1990*

**July 7** Anaheim, CA; Pacific Coast Conference of Free Methodists, missions banquet, (213) 822-8094.

**July 17, 18** Muskegon, MI; Maranatha Bible Conference, women's day, (616) 798-2161.

**July 29** E. Middlebury, VT; Valley Bible Church.

**August 20** Edmonton, Alberta; Canadian Christian Booksellers Convention.

**September 8** Atlanta, GA; Perimeter Church, women's seminar; Susan McEntyre, (404) 399-2635.

**September 21, 22** New York, NY; L.I.F.E. conference on sexuality, Mrs. Ron Highley, (212) 239-9629.

**September 29** Lima, OH; WTGN anniversary celebration, (419) 227-2525.

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