

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

March / April 1992

ISSN 8756-1336

Learning the Father's Love

When my brother Dave was very small we spent a week at the seaside in Belmar, New Jersey. In vain my father tried to persuade the little boy to come into the waves with him and jump, promising to hold him safely and not allow the waves to sweep over his head. He took me (only a year older) into the ocean and showed Dave how much fun it would be. Nothing doing. The ocean was terrifying. Dave was sure it would mean certain disaster, and he could not trust his father. On the last day of our vacation he gave in. He was not swept away, his father held him as promised, and he had far more fun than he could have imagined, whereupon he burst into tears and wailed, "Why didn't you *make* me go in?"

An early lesson in prayer often comes through an ordeal of fear. We face impending adversity and we doubt the love, wisdom and power of our Father in heaven. We've tried everything else and in our desperation we turn to prayer—of the primitive sort: here's Somebody who's reputed to be able to do anything. The great question is, can I get Him to do what I want? How do I twist His arm, how persuade a remote and reluctant deity to change His mind?

When the people of Israel were encamped in Pihahiroth and saw the Egyptians coming after them, they felt they were looking death in the face and it was all Moses' fault—"as if there weren't enough graves in Egypt that you brought us out here to die!"

"Don't be afraid," said Moses. "Stand by. The Lord will fight for you if you'll just be quiet."

You know the story of deliverance—the sea was rolled back, Israel marched through it dry shod, and

when the Egyptians pursued them the sea swamped their horses, their chariots, and the whole army. "Not even one of them remained." The song of victory Moses and Israel sang reveals their recognition not only of the strength, majesty and wonder-working of the Lord, but of His lovingkindness, immeasurably beyond anything they had dared to hope.

Poor Dave! His father could have forced him to come into the water, but he could not have forced him to relax and enjoy it. As long as the child insisted on protecting himself, saving the life he was sure he would lose, he could not trust the strong love of his father. He refused to surrender. In this simple story we hear echoes of the most ancient story, of the two who, distrusting the word of their Father, fearing that obedience to Him would ultimately bar them from happiness, chose to repudiate their dependence on Him. Sin, death, destruction for the whole race were the result.

Learning to pray is learning to trust the wisdom, the power, and the love of our Heavenly Father, always so far beyond our dreams. He knows our need and knows ways to meet it that have never entered our heads. Things we feel sure we need for happiness may often lead to our ruin, and things we think will ruin us (the chariots of Egypt, the waters of the sea, or the little waves in Belmar!), if we believe what the Father tells us and surrender ourselves into His strong arms, bring us deliverance and joy.

The only escape from self-love is self-surrender. "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mt 16:25). "Dwell in My love. If you heed My commands, you will dwell in My love, as I have heeded My Father's commands and dwell in His love. I have spoken thus to you, so that My joy may be in you, and your joy complete" (Jn 15:9-11). My father knew far better than his small, fearful, stubborn son what would give him joy. So does our Heavenly Father. Whenever I have resisted Him I have cheated myself, as my little brother did. Whenever I have yielded, I have found joy.

Don't Forfeit Your Peace

It would not be possible to exaggerate the importance hymns and spiritual songs have played in my spiritual growth. One of the latter, familiar to most of you, has this line: "O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." Prayerlessness is one of many ways by which we can easily forfeit the peace God wants us to have. I've been thinking of some other ways. Here's a sampling:

1. Resent God's ways.
2. Worry as much as possible.
3. Pray only about things you can't manage by yourself.
4. Refuse to accept what God gives.
5. Look for peace elsewhere than in Him.
6. Try to rule your own life.
7. Doubt God's word.
8. Carry all your cares.

If you'd rather *not* forfeit your peace, here are eight ways to find it (antidotes to the above eight):

1. "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them" (Ps 119:165). "Circumstances are the expression of God's will," wrote Bishop Handley Moule.
2. "Don't worry about anything whatever" (Phil 4:6 JBP).
3. "In everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Then the peace of God... will guard your hearts" (Phil 4:6,7).
4. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me... and you will find rest" (Mt 11:29).
5. "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give" (Jn 14:27).
6. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Col 3:15).
7. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom 15:13).
8. "He cares for you, so cast all your anxiety on him" (1 Pt 5:7).

Source Found

The prayer poem quoted in the May/June 1991 issue was written by Marian B. Craig.

Widows' Reunion

In December Pat Robertson of *The 700 Club* invited all five of us whose husbands were killed in Ecuador in 1956 to come to Virginia Beach to tape a program which was aired in January. It was the first time we had all been together since 1957. Three of us (Marj Saint Van Der Puy, Olive Fleming Liefeld and I) had husbands with us. Barbara Youderian was accompanied by her son Jerry, Marilou McCully by her son Matt who was born six weeks after his father died.

We stayed in CBN's beautiful new Founders Inn. Time was too short to catch up on all those years, but each of us spoke of how the Lord had mercifully prepared us for widowhood, sustained us in our grief, and faithfully led us in the thirty-six years since. The strangest experience for me was viewing the unedited footage CBN had just filmed in Ecuador of the Aucas (now called Waorani). Faces often seen in the firelight of the little wall-less house where Valerie and I had lived flashed across the screen, faces ravaged now by age but recognizable to me still. Gikita's monologue on the soundtrack took me back to my struggles with that difficult unwritten language, and my chagrin at watching the breathtaking speed with which my three-year-old child acquired it.

Number Seven

We give thanks to God for Theodore Flagg Shepard, born January 10, 1992, to my daughter Valerie and her husband Walt Shepard. Walter 14, Elisabeth 12, Christiana 10, Jim 7, Colleen 5, and Evangeline 3 all welcome Theodore. I hope we'll have a picture of the tribe in the next newsletter.

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Child Training

(Matthew Henry's commentary on Proverbs 19:18)

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

Parents are here cautioned against a foolish indulgence of their children, that are untoward and vitiously (sic) inclined, and that discover such an ill temper of mind as is not likely to be cured but by severity.

1. Do not say that it is all in good time to correct them, no, as soon as ever there appears a corrupt disposition in them, check it immediately, before it gets head and takes root and is hardened into a habit; CHASTEN THY SON WHILE THERE IS HOPE, for perhaps if he be let alone a while, he will be past hope, and a much greater chastening will not do that which now a less would effect. It is easier plucking up weeds as soon as they spring up, and the bullock that is designed for the yoke should be betimes accustomed to it...
2. Do not say that it is a pity to correct them, and that because they cry and beg to be forgiven, you cannot find it in your heart to do it; if the point will be gained without correction well and good; but if you find as it often proves, that your forgiving them once, upon a dissembled repentance and promise of amendment, does but imbolden (sic) them to offend again, especially if it be a thing in itself sinful—as lying, swearing, ribaldry, stealing, or the like; in such a case put on resolution, and LET NOT THY SOUL SPARE FOR HIS CRYING. It is better that he should cry under thy rod than under the sword of the magistrate or, which is more fearful, that of divine vengeance.

Letter from a Teen-Age Boy

(Seventeen, just graduated from high school) "Listened to your broadcast.... I am also a firm believer in sexual purity, still a virgin and planning to stay that way till after I'm married. If a complete commitment to Christ and His cause was preached and practiced by Christian parents and the older generation, young people would see that there is more to life than finding a sexual partner, in marriage or out. If only they could see that the essence of life is to glorify Christ! Jesus calls us to a radical commitment."

Iron Shoes

When some out-of-the ordinary supply is needed in order for us to accomplish the job given, we can be confident it will be provided. "Shoes of Iron" were asked in Moses' blessing for Asher, an impossibly long-lasting provision from God. The old spiritual says, "I got shoes, you got shoes, all God's children got shoes," but not all God's children have iron ones; only those who need them. Our heavenly Father knows exactly what we will require to fulfill His purposes for us. It is wrong—it is, in fact, a sin—for us to worry about where the shoes will come from. "Trust me!" God says to us. "I'll give you iron ones if only iron ones can do the job."

I worried this morning about the seemingly impossibility of doing everything that needs to be done before Wednesday when we are moving to a new house. Then I remembered that strength according to my day's need is promised in the same verse (Dt 33:25), and any special need—"iron shoes" or whatever—will also be forthcoming.

—Excerpt from *A Lamp for My Feet*,
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Prayer

"Grant, O Lord my God, that I may never fall away in success or in failure; that I may not be prideful in prosperity nor dejected in adversity. Let me rejoice only in what unites us and sorrow only in what separates us. May I strive to please no one or fear to displease anyone except Yourself. May I seek always the things that are eternal and never those that are only temporal. May I shun any joy that is without You and never seek any that is beside You. O Lord, may I delight in any work I do for You and tire of any rest that is apart from You. My God, let me direct my heart towards You, and in my failings, always repent with a purpose of amendment." St. Thomas Aquinas

Recommended Reading

Patricia St. John: *Until the Day Break*, The life and work of Liliias Trotter (1853-1928), pioneer missionary to Muslim North Africa, author of *Parables of the Cross* and *Parables of the Christ-Life*, which are now out of print. (*Until the Day Break* is available from Send the Light, P.O. Box 28, Waynesboro, GA 30830, \$4.95.)

Prayer Requests

Thank you, dear readers, for your prayers. I am deeply aware of divine help daily, and I know you are cooperators together with God as you pray for Lars and me.

- Pray that the Lord will touch my lips with coals from His altar, that I may speak His message with His power. My radio taping is done every other month near my home. The next tapings will be on March 23-25 and May 11-13.
- Thank God with me for the work He has given Lars to do—handling all books and tapes at the places where I speak; making travel arrangements; ordering books for the next engagement; negotiating contracts with publishers; answering the phone (it seems to ring all day); protecting me when I'm at my desk and as we travel. For years before he came along I was praying for help, a manager or something, never dreaming God's answer would be a *husband!*
- Praise that Lars's glaucoma has not worsened. He's faithful with the drops, six times a day, and pressure holds steady.

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 March - May 1992

March 14 Waterloo, IA; station KNWS, Betty Brandhorst, (319) 296-1975.

March 18 Danvers, MA; Catholic Church, no details yet.

March 23-25 Taping for broadcast.

April 3-5 Schroon Lake, NY; Word of Life Women's Conference, Carol Lough, (518) 532-7970 or 532-7111.

April 16 Des Moines, IA; Prayer Breakfast, Robert Throckmorton, (515) 244-2600.

April 24,25 Pittsburgh, PA; Soli Deo Gloria, Inc., Don Kistler, (412) 238-7741.

April 27 Charlotte, NC; Evangelical Press Association convention, Rev. Robert Mayer, (704) 545-6161.

May 1 Long Beach, CA; Long Beach Rescue Mission, (213) 591-1292.

May 1-3 Sun Valley, CA; Grace Community Church, Debbie Christopher, (818) 909-5730.

May 11-13 Taping for broadcast.

May 15,16 Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Sheridan Family Ministries, (305) 583-1552.

May 23 Providence, RI; North American Catholic Educational Programming Foundation, Inc., (401) 353-4524.

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