

LIFE-TAKING OR LIFE-GIVING?

Today's Treasure

*Now choose life.....
Deuteronomy 30:19b*

Dear Friends,

Over twenty years ago I attended my last conference as a member of the women's ministry team for our denomination. Sadness filled my heart as I let go of regular contact with the women who helped shepherd me through the first five years after the death of my son, Mark. I struggled to accept the "changing of the guard as a good thing." The Lord had transformed my thinking about women's ministry and leadership through this small group of women. They showed me how to love broken people in a new way.

I nursed my sadness as the conference began and then the Lord gave me a tangible picture of how this important ministry was not about me, but about how He was building a strong network of women across the country whose hearts beat as one when it came to passing on to other women their own love for Jesus and His Word.

A young, enthusiastic woman took the podium and for the next five minutes my heart started beating faster as her love for Jesus, His people and His Word flowed out through her words. I knew the vision of the women's ministry was working and that the future of the women's ministry would flourish.

That young woman was Karen Hodge, the wife of a church planter. Church planting in those days meant going into a community where you didn't know anyone, "to go out to the byways and highways and compel people to come in!" Karen enthusiastically described how the truths she learned through the resources produced by the women's ministry equipped her for this task and how the Lord was growing the church. In that moment, I knew I would see Karen Hodge in leadership one day.

Karen is now the women's ministry consultant for the Women's Ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America. I love her heart for women, for the Word, and for equipping women to be life-givers rather than life-takers. In the next two weeks of devotionals, Karen will give us a glimpse into the book she co-authored with Susan

Hunt, *Life-Giving Leadership*. Before you conclude that this series is not for you because you don't hold an official leadership position anywhere, listen to Karen's introduction:

"Maybe you are like me and you don't consider yourself a leader, but I encourage you to look over your shoulder. You might have a 3-year-old, a corporate boardroom, a classroom of teenagers, or a women's ministry team following you. I have found there are many misconceptions about leadership. The word "leadership" is not synonymous with authority or decision making. It has little to do with a title or a role. Leadership, biblically speaking, looks radically different. It is upside down. It holds within it the potential to be life-giving or life-taking. **Biblical leadership is not positional leadership but rather servant leadership.**"

Karen Hodge, *Life-Giving Leadership*

It is such a privilege to share my friend Karen Hodge with you over these next two weeks. Her words will be like salty peanuts. You will want to hear more and you can! Check out her book, *Life-giving Leadership*.

Treasured by Him,
Sharon