

**Breaking the Never-Ending Cycle**  
**By Karen Grant, Guest Writer**

**Today's Treasure**

*For by grace we have been saved through faith. And this is not our own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

*Eph. 2:8-10*

A few weeks ago, Daily Treasure Guest Writer, Karen Grant, wrote about Betrayal. She did not sugar coat the grief of betrayal with Christian platitudes. Karen acknowledged learning how to forgive and break the bondage of our thoughts constantly reliving the betrayal is painful, long, and almost impossible without God's strength and the disciplines of grace. As I wrote about the highway to Zion in those whose strength is in the Lord and whose hearts are fixed on pilgrimage, I read Karen's devotional for that day. It is a perfect way to clarify what it means to intentionally create a highway in your heart as you face the fears, struggles, and challenges while on your pilgrimage Home.

(To read the entire Betrayal series:

<https://www.markinc.org/daily-treasure-devotion/2021/1/1/title-l2grm-69sw3-txnwz-fpc2r>)

From Karen...

Our home is in a semi-rural area, and we see lots of wildlife. Groundhogs dance, fawns learn to stand on wobbly legs, rabbits, geese, turkeys, and more live in observable proximity. Some are shy and some are bossy, but all of them are creatures of habit. For instance, I can walk into the woods and see their trails. How is a trail made? Well, by habitually going the same way to the same destination. One of our favorite family memories is of our dearly departed basset hound following her habitual path around the deck to the back door long after the deck was removed.

We too are creatures of habit and often get stuck using familiar paths, reviewing hurts and betrayals in never-ending cycles.

If we are going to actually become free of preoccupation with betrayals, there is more help available than praying for redress or relief. We can also take hold of some means of grace He has provided and we can participate in our healing.

Yes, we must pray – in repentance for our part of relational messes and for the ability to forgive others. Yes, we can pour out our cries over hurtful experiences. He hears us and He heals. We may find that counseling is needful. What are some other ways we can take part in the healing process?

First, we can observe our thought patterns. When I find myself thinking of a betrayal, I can pause and observe: What “trail” am I taking? I can find Scripture to memorize and use as a signpost to exit the roundabout. See Ephesians 4:1-3, Isaiah 26:3, and Romans 12:18 for examples of powerful living words.

I can notice how my physical state is affecting my thought life. Sometimes we need to humbly acknowledge that our humanity affects our thought life, including my eating or exercise and rest patterns.

How am I feeling emotionally? Has something disturbed me today that I’m piggybacking onto an old wound? Am I grieving a loss, which takes me down a well-worn trail to other losses? Is there a healthy way to grieve this fresh hurt without attaching it to an old betrayal?

How could this look?

When I see specific people who have left our organization, leaving a trail of gossip to their new workplace, I become alert. I remember that I have worked through the hurt and made peace with the fact that others may believe their version of certain events as “the real story.” I haven’t gone to others to straighten their trail, to “correct” their version. The Lord has shown me my part, and I have repented, sorrowed, complained, and willed to forgive by God’s grace. But, when paths cross and I purposefully walk over to greet that individual, and they turn away. Ouch.

What trail has the Lord intentionally created through grace for when this happens? Are roadblocks prepared, barring the betrayal cycle? Have I prepared the way for the Holy Spirit to work? Am I prepared to pray immediately for the Lord to direct my thoughts rather than go back into the past hurts? Are you equipped to tell yourself the truth? Their attitude is not my responsibility, but my attitude is. Is this the exact moment I need to experience a path correction and pray: “And forgive [me my] debts, as [I] forgive [my] debtors” (Matthew 6:12 ESV).

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Forging a new trail takes effort. I have to participate, to carefully tramp down a new path until it becomes the familiar one. It may take a machete to tear through invasive growth I've allowed or even collected, but it is worthwhile labor.

As we read in *Today's Treasure*:

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Beating down a new, righteous path for my thought life is a worth while work. You see, Christ even prepared the new trail. He has gone ahead of us, walking through misunderstandings, betrayals, and sorrows. He created a way for us that is based on what He has done for us, not what has been done to us. Our good works include working on ourselves in response to the grace He gives: replacing sinful habits with healthy ones – spiritual, mental, and physical, so that we no longer have to follow the old paths that ensnare us.

#### PRAYER

Oh Jesus, thank you for going before us, forging a new trail for us to travel with confidence, knowing You, too, experienced betrayal, betrayal beyond our imagination. May we fall so in love with You, that our auto-response to our betrayers is forgiveness. May You break the cycle of anger and bitterness by filling our hearts with a deeper understanding of Your sovereign love.

Bio:

Karen Grant loves being a pastor's wife at Parish Presbyterian Church. She and her husband have three grown children and 6 amazing grandsons. A graduate of Covenant Seminary, she also served on the PCA's multicultural church planting and mercy committee. She and her husband co-founded Franklin Classical School in Franklin, Tennessee, where she continues to serve on the board of trustees. She enjoys studying & teaching the Bible, reading, traveling, cooking, working out with her exercise buddies, and all God's creation.