

Seeing God

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Today's Treasure

But ask the animals and they will teach you, or the birds of the air and they will tell you. Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

Job 12: 7-10

"Sometimes it's so hard to talk to God and to trust him when I can't see him or feel Him."

My daughter said this to me while we lay there cuddled in her bed one night. I always take time to lay with my children while tucking them in, partly because I have regrets of being "too busy" to do it years ago, but mostly because I have found it to be a special treasured time for me and them. Even on days that I may feel I am physically and mentally ready to quit, my daughter can have this moment to share this kind of concern for us to address. I pray that God gives me words of wisdom to reach deep inside her troubled heart. Even in my moments of weakness, it seems as though these become my best opportunities. The raw, tender, moments of deep exposure of the heart which lead to more Gospel opportunities happen more in the final minutes of the day than any other time. How do I encourage my sweet child to give her deepest cares to God when she can't find him? She believes, but Lord, help her unbelief!

Sadly, I have had these moments myself, times when my present darkness hid me from faith without sight. The darkness was so thick I could barely feel myself, let alone God. I knew God was there, yet I couldn't see him or feel him. The world around me had lost its shine. It lacked beauty and it mocked me. How did I find God's grace again? How do I prove to her that He is there? That He cares? That He is beautiful?

I paid a visit to my memories and my own searching for the answer to the same question. The Lord tenderly reminded me of my journey to sense God's presence and answers to my prayers.

Picking up my camera was one of the hardest things to do again after my oldest daughter, Ashley, died. I didn't want to record the moments that were forever broken. The photos would be incomplete. I picked up my camera in search of beauty and that one choice began a journey of finding God's presence through the lens of my camera.

Sweet child of mine, God is there. He is all around you. He is in His creation. His creation screams out His name. It praises Him!

At first, I chose to photograph things that were not broken. I escaped for moments in time to my garden, to the woods, to the fields. I searched for beauty there. I searched for God, and for His beauty. I found Him in the delicate flowers in my garden, the tiny bees and butterflies. He was there in the miraculous journey that a cicada makes from the mud to the tree only to shed its skin and emerge fresh with a new summer song. I found Him in the rays of sunshine escaping the evening storm clouds, the dew drops on a spider's web. Then I began to find Him in the broken places. It was a new kind of beauty, a broken hallelujah. I found Him on the faces of my children as they bravely lived each day going forward in a fractured world. I found Him in tears that ran down my face as I recorded new days, the days of our new, yet unwelcomed life. The broken days that began to show a beauty that could not be understood.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

And so, when my little girl whispers just before going to sleep, "Sometimes it's so hard to talk to God and to trust him when I can't see him or feel Him" I share from my own journey:

He is there, sweet child, you can see Him when He provides a way when there seems to be none to follow. Isn't it amazing that just when we worry about something, we turn around and see how God provided just what we needed? I remember the years of life before losing Ashley, the days when the future was uncertain. Our livelihood depended on growing flowers in a greenhouse, which is much like farming in that it is very dependent on the weather for a good season. There were many times that we worried through bad weather, bad crops, poor sales and other things we could not control. I would remind my husband to look back and see how God had provided for us in the past, and know that He will provide for us again no matter what. I stood strong on those things I had learned as a child. The songs I had sung became alive in meaning and word.

My child, seek God's word, believe His promises. Know that He cares about the littlest of things. Know that He goes before you and that He loves you. Look back, and see what He has done in the past and know that He will do it again. Spend time in the beauty around you, smell the flowers, admire the critters, be amazed by every sunrise and sunset. Open your eyes, sweet child and you will behold His beauty, His heaven on earth, displayed in all that He created and loves.