

## Jump Rope

Thursday, 01 June 2006

Jane and I are the parents of three girls. If you know anything about girls then you know everything about jumping rope. It's a ritual for girls. Every little girl that I ever knew had a jump rope. Even the schools they attended had large, grass jumping ropes. I tried 'jumping' a couple times. I still remember some of the lingo: 'hot peppers' and 'double dutch.' I also remember that the secret to jumping rope was the timing. I mean, the rope, or in some cases the ropes, were 'whirlwinds' of rope! I can still see one of our daughters standing at the side, 'semi-stepping' into the rope, waiting for just the right time to 'step in.' They needed to get into the rhythm of the thing to get into the thing! Remembering that 'whirlwind of ropes' reminded me of how life is, and especially the Christian Life.

Our lives are like those whirlwinds. We are so busy. We're trying to 'keep up with the Joneses.' We're attempting to become financially secure; most everyone is trying to 'get theirs' before someone else comes along and takes 'theirs' from them. Most are searching for a fountain of youth. We're dieting. We're exercising. We look for purpose. On top of that, we 'gotta' have transportation, gotta get some health insurance, got bills to pay, gas is going up to \$4 a gallon, gotta eat, have to mow the grass before it rains, when was that soccer game? There is this meeting and that meeting. Don't forget the braces for 'Sally's smile,' for some people the pool needs 'shocking,' there's the wedding to get organized and pay for, need to back up the computer just in case some virus comes along and destroys all that important information on that hard drive. Need to order that "How to Save Time and Money" book from Half.com. Got to re-schedule the dentist appointment. Supposed to meet the spouse downtown at 6pm, deliver the girls at 7pm. Can't forget to make the chicken-noodle soup for the neighbor who's sick with the latest flu, hopefully not that 'bird flu' thing! When am I ever going to get the flowers watered? That's just today's list. Tomorrow has its own problems and solutions. It's hurry, hurry, hurry! It's turnin' and burnin'!

I got tired just typing that list. Ever since the Garden of Eden incident, the children of Adam and Eve have 'paddled upstream' against so many daily struggles. In the beginning, Adam and Eve lived in an environment that fostered Peace. I doubt that they knew what a 'whirlwind' was, living in the 'terrarium' of the original earth. Now, this earth comes with a 'hard-labor' just to exist.

I remember a story told by Max Lucado. It was about a 60 year old man that had just finished running in his 60th iron-man contest. Max asked him how he did it at that age and at that pace. The man's reply was, 'I start out very slow and taper off after that.' That's a pretty good formula for the Christian life I think. I don't mean that in relationship to working hard, I mean that in the sense of slowing down enough to hear the heart of God and tapering off enough to make quality decisions about what to spend our time.

That's why it's so critical for believers to 'enter into His Rest.' Doing that is very much like entering that jump rope. Having been born again, we then, in a second step of our choosing, can enter into the life-style of the Gospel. Jesus said, 'If you abide in my Word, then you are my disciples, and you shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you Free.' Just as in this Scripture verse, the Christian life is a process. At the end of that process, we will be made free! I mean you have to go through something; we need to get in 'order' with God, to discover the fullness of God. So much of the Gospel has an order like that. Remember: Body, Soul and Spirit. Faith, Hope and Love. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Things 'that were, that are and that are to come.' The Outer court, Inner court and Holy of Holies of the tabernacle. We move through places with God, in patterns ordered by God. To get to the Peaceful place of God, we will need to move in His patterns in our daily lives. We will need to move in the patterns of God and get into the 'rhythm' of God.

I have used this story before about chairs. We can have a seminar on chairs. We can get coffee table books showing us all kinds of chairs. We can purchase DVD's that show us how chairs are designed, manufactured and sold. We can travel to factories and look at all kinds of chairs. We can buy a chair or buy hundreds of chairs, but having done all those

things, you'll still not really 'know' the true nature and purpose of a chair until you've sat down on one! You must put all your weight on a chair before you know everything there is to know about a chair. Before that you had a theory about chairs, you had ideas about how a chair works and even speculated on a chair's purpose. However, you have to actually sit in a chair to know all about chairs. The Gospel is the same. All the reading, the memorizing, the attending Bible studies, traveling to conferences and discussions about the Gospel will only leave you with a philosophy about the Gospel. Until you have put your weight (your life) on the Gospel you really don't know the Gospel. To find that peaceful place inside this earthly whirlwind, we will need to enter into the center of that whirlwind. That is where God is.

You've heard of the phrase 'eye of the hurricane'. In the center of those terrible storms, with winds and destruction all around, there is a place where it is calm. You can actually stand in the 'eye' right in the middle of that storm and be perfectly safe. The Gospel will do that for us. Right in the middle of the war on terror, in the middle of financial pressure, in the heat of a medical crisis, there is a Peaceful Place! But, you're not going to be able to enter into it by just 'talking about it.' We will have to get in rhythm with the 'God life;' we'll have to take a step to get in there! Just as we must get into the rhythm of the rope to enter into 'hot peppers,' we'll need to get into the rhythm of God as well. Become a giver, not just money but attitude as well. Become an encourager, not just someone needing encouragement all the time. Become someone that is externally minded. Someone not consumed by 'my way, my rights, and my needs.' Those are the 'semi-steps' similar to our daughters waiting at the edge of the jump rope, timing the jump rope. Getting into the rhythm with God will cause us to enter into the center of the 'whirlwinds' of this life. It is calm inside that place once you get in the 'center.' You can relax there. There will be things going on all around you but you will not have to struggle each day. You will not 'pull your hair out' trying to come up with every solution. You will enter into a state of trusting God in a way that you have not been able to do thus far.

Inside that peaceful place there are blessings! Getting into the 'rhythm of God' sets in motion a life-style with God. Will everything be perfect? No! Will it always go well? Probably not! Is every day a 'picnic'? No, might be a war that day! But in God's very special way, blessings come around just the same. There is a special meaning to the Hebrew word for blessing, "R'RaCha." In that language, and so much of the time in all that language, special notice is to be taken when reading or studying the original text. In the Hebrew language words are either male or female. In this case, the word "R'RaCha&hellip;" is female. Its essence is that one blessing becomes two blessings, and so on. You see, "R'RaCha" has the ability and the nature to multiply itself! One blessing produces many more! We will have to become like Radar O'Reilly on Mash, 'wait for it!' Some days we will not be able to see it, but Radar O'Reilly could always anticipate it something happening long before anyone else. It will come if we are in that center place, that secret place that God has prepared for us. Get in rhythm with God's season. Give and expect it to grow, Love and expect it to multiply, Trust and watch the Father be Trustworthy. That's the rhythm of God. Keep doing even when things don't seem to be working for you. You need to stop looking back to see if it's working for you. Going back is to step back into the whirlwind. According to Scripture, going back is seven times worse! Anyway, faith is the evidence of things not seen. Just do it! Over and over do it! That faithful 'action' will eventually produce a 'kingdom' blessing from God's Life.

You will have to step into God's rhythm, just like our daughters stepped into that jump rope. In that place, in that 'center,' scriptures that emphasize we 'are not our own,' that we 'are not seeking our own life' will make sense and become natural way to live for us. Believing is enough to get us to Heaven, actively stepping from the edge of the whirlwind to the center of the whirlwind, stepping from just 'Believer' to being a Disciple takes 'process'! That process, as best as I can describe it, is acting like and depending on God as our center of the whirlwind. It's the old argument, not just talk but walk also. It's not walk for the Laws sake. It's a walk whose action produces the environment for manifestation of God. It's Faith with action, Faith with walk.