

Reminders of Love in the Bottom of the Pit

February 2019

Women's Ministries Newsletter

I sat at the kitchen counter on Thanksgiving Day cutting carrots while talking to my aunt who was elbow deep in preparing her famous turkey. As she worked, I looked at her wedding ring and noticed something seemed odd. As I looked closer, I asked, "Nedra, is your diamond gone?" The color drained from her face as she looked down and realized the beautiful marquis had fallen out. This started a frantic search everywhere in the kitchen for the precious stone. We all ate our turkey gingerly that night, hoping that the jewel wasn't hidden in the stuffing, but dearly hoping to find it.



For months, she searched high and low, combing through every vacuum bag, every hint of sparkle on her carpet, every crevice in her home—even deconstructing the disposal in the sink. After

five months and nearly giving up hope of finding it, my aunt caught a shine in the bottom of her laundry basket. As she reached between the cotton cords, she picked up the beautiful marquis.

The diamond in her ring isn't what represents, keeps, or establishes the love between her and her husband; the ring is only a symbol. But this cherished piece was a consistent reminder of the covenantal love between them. The sparkle was a sweet reminder of the pennies my uncle saved to give his sweet bride the best he could sacrifice when they were married young.

As the world focuses on the sparkle and slashed prices of diamonds during the "love holiday", positing roses and chocolate and dinner with white napkins as the equation for true romance, do you find yourself coming up empty on

the foundational reminder of God's love that sets all other earthly relationships right?

This story is a visual that we might just find the very completeness we need of God's true, covenantal, forever love at the bottom of the pit, in the least expected place, and in the catch of a brief moment. The mindset to seeking will find He is actually not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27). There is opportunity to find reminders of His presence and His promise everywhere the world says there isn't beauty. In the laundry basket, in the kitchen sink, in the routine of life... a heart set in devotion and a mind continually washed in the Word will find the sweetest reminders of unity with Him in the ordinary because we live and move and have our being in Him (Acts 17:28).

When the loss, the darkness, or the dry spirit seems to make the love feel lost, we are able to remember the covenant of God's love. He does not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly (Ps. 84:11). In this 'holiday of love' season, may you find the joy in seeking and truly finding reminders of His love and covenant with you in the beauty of His Word and the fellowship of His people (Matt. 7:8).

"Women's Ministries seeks to support the church's mission and vision to multiply disciples of Jesus Christ. Committed to the Word as our authority, we're passionate about nurturing a culture in which Titus 2 discipleship (*older teaching younger*) can thrive by providing opportunities, resources, and support for women of all ages to connect with one another and the Lord Jesus Christ."



The Next Generation

It's exciting to hear and see what God is doing in the hearts of our young women. Last month some of them attended the EFCA District Youth Conference in Green Bay. Be encouraged as they share what God impressed upon their hearts:

"I loved that when I'm at Districts, I can block out all other distractions and worship the Lord our Savior. I loved showing love to God by singing praise to our God."

"God had been teaching me lately to open up to others, not hold it in when I'm upset and hurting; that I'm loved and am good enough! That He is a father to me... the only one I need! I experienced God pulling on my heart and helping me feel like I'm not alone. He cares."

"Districts has always been a highlight to my year and I always enjoy being with my youth group girls. We all have a blast being together and about learning about Christ and His love for us! This year we had an amazing seminar speaker, Olivia Ryan, who talked about how we are more than just worth it, we're priceless. All the girls love her as she is so authentic in her faith!"

"This year at Districts, the speaker (Reid Kapple) really spoke to me relating to what the world views as good. I always knew that God placed certain morals in our hearts but it was good to be reminded that we don't need to decide what's right because God has already made it clear to us."

"Districts is more than a three-day experience, it is three days surrounded by God-loving people worshipping and praising our Creator. Those three days are more than 72 hours, they change lives. I came to know Christ at Districts as a child, and every year I go back I am reminded of how blessed I am because of it."

"Districts 2019 really helped me to think about the culture that we live in today and the relativity of truth in our modern society, but also the fact that truth must be rooted in something. Truth must have a fixed point, and for me that's the Bible. I think that Reid's sermons will help me to defend my faith against modernist views and see phrases like 'YOLO' in a different light from a Christian perspective."



Love Is In The Air

Love is in the air, or so Hallmark might tell us. Where do you find yourself this season? Maybe you're overwhelmed with gratitude for the people God has placed in your life, family or friends to love and to be loved by. Or perhaps you find yourself longing for deeper authentic relationships. In either case, be encouraged as you lift your eyes up.

Here are some practical approaches to encourage you.

1. Thank God in the season you're in right now. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 directs us to *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*
2. Thank Him for the people He has put in your life, and pray for opportunities to love them God's way. Romans 12:9-10 *"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."*
3. Rest in knowing the depth of God's love for you. John 15:12-13 *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*
4. Be reminded that nothing can separate you from God's love. Romans 8:37-39 reminds us *"...neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
5. Lean into Him and know His peace. Isaiah 26:3 *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."*

Hallmark might attempt to make the season pretty, but God makes it oh so personal. Look up, trust Him to help you love others, and know how much you're loved.



Mark it on your calendars, gather your friends,
and make plans to attend

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