

Hearts of Love

Tom & Debbie Tillman "to touch the world for Jesus Christ"

A free monthly publication of Hearts of Love Ministries.

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Hearts of Love is a non-profit ministry, dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ whenever and wherever we find open doors. Our first priority is to glorify God and lead whomever possible to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Please pray for us faithfully. We need your prayer, and we appreciate it more than we could ever say. Please consider us an extension of your ministry in this world, and support us with your prayer as such.

***May God richly
bless you!***

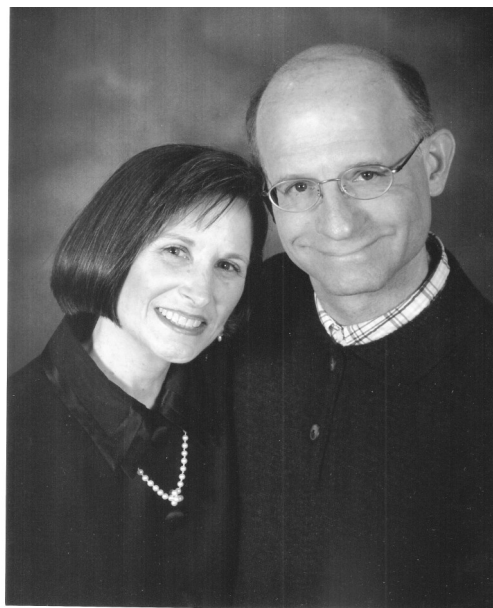
Tom & Debbie

When Discouragement Comes Calling

Truly, I (Debbie) am so very grateful for God's hand on my life but in all honesty, sometimes I don't cooperate with Him the way I should. Sometimes this daughter of the King of Kings not only allows discouragement to come calling but occasionally other uninvited visitors such as disappointment, fear, anger & anxiety attempt to also claim a piece of me. So, where did this come from, how did it begin?

I know the source—the enemy of my soul, the liar & the father of lies, the accuser of the brethren, the destroyer, the deceiver, the one who was defeated 2,000 years ago at the cross—he is still prowling about like a roaring lion seeking to devour but, thankfully, 'greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.' 1 John 4:4

The problem always begins when I let my guard down and I'm ambushed by one of his flaming missiles which may have been unknowingly launched by people close to me or may be the result of taking in too much of the so-called news. Rather than extinguish the missile with the Truth of God, I let it burn, hurt & fester and, before I know it, those other visitors I mentioned have crept in right under my nose to create the party I never wanted to have! Thankfully, when I realize what's going on and cry out to



*He has committed to
us the word of
Reconciliation.
Therefore, we are
Ambassadors for Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:19,20*

God, He meets me with His Truth that sets me free to once again see from His perspective and to walk, live in the freedom He bought for us on the cross.

Having just walked through a brief discouraging season, I decided to contribute to this month's newsletter with the hope of encouraging some of you.

Like us, many of you are disturbed by the state of our country. I recently reread some of my journaling surrounding the time of 9/11. I had written that our country seemed more united than I believe it ever had been in my lifetime, and the contrast between then and now struck me with such grief and horror over the division and hostile undercurrent that seems to be undermining the foundation of our great nation. I sometimes wonder if we aren't on the brink of civil war as there are so many who are discouraged and

disillusioned because of the current political, social, economic and health situation of our country but we must not allow this to paralyze or muzzle us!

In the middle of *discouragement* is the word *courage* and the opposite of *discourage* is *encourage*. When we choose to begin moving from the position of being discouraged, we are exercising the courage and strength that comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (the One who is greater within us!) to seek God and His truth rather than dwell in the pit of discouragement. God always has the lifeline of His Word of Truth extended to us in the pit of discouragement but it is up to us to take the initiative and courageously grab hold of it for all we're worth. Trust me, I know that often this is easier said than done but I also know from my own experience that God is really, truly more than enough! He means it when He says, 'Draw near to me,

and I will draw near to you.' Js 4:8

I was recently reminded of Paul's instruction to young Timothy because he knew how difficult it was to live in a world that often brought discouragement to God's people. Paul's fatherly instruction was to 'Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'

1 Tim 6:12

But, what does it look like to 'fight the good fight of faith'?

The first word that came to me as I pondered this is '*steadfast*'. In a nutshell, it's a calling to remain true to God and His Word, to fix my eyes on Jesus Christ—I am the one who must do this, who must choose to do so and must choose to steady myself on Him, to hold fast and sure to Him. It is recognizing that He is my surety, my identity, my hope, my EVERYTHING. It's the reminder, 'If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.'

Col 3:1-2

Fight the good fight indicates to me that we are in a battle but the 'good' aspect of the *fight of faith* is that we are not fighting alone, and we are not powerless in the fight. As I considered this, much Scripture began pouring into my mind that I will label as faith maneuvers to fight the good fight of faith.

'For we walk by faith, not by sight.' 2 Cor 5:7 The Greek word for 'walk' in this verse is *peripateo*

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which means to 'walk at large, tread all around, to live, to be occupied with.' I underline that last description because we have been instructed by Jesus to 'occupy until He returns'. Our living occupation is to have faith in Jesus Christ as our foundation. In the same way, our good fight of faith is how we occupy in steadfastness.

Discouragement may still come because we are, after all, human but I can know that God will meet me with His eternal resources for my temporal situation as soon as I turn to Him—ahh, such is His faithfulness!

'Rejoice always.' 1 Thess 5:16 Praising God is both powerful and profitable as it results in an 'about face' to the condition of my heart and mind. Like everything else, praising God is my choice but its fruit is sweet and delicious to my soul, bringing peace in the midst of anxiety & turmoil, and it stills my heart to begin to see life's stuff from God's perspective: He's in control and 'causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose.' Rom 8:28

'Pray without ceasing.' 1 Thes 5:17 Taking our everyday *stuff* to Him in prayer is a privilege that is often neglected and/or short-sighted. Part of praying without ceasing is continuing to pour out to God our issues, fears, hopes and needs and then, by faith, trusting Him to care for us, to show us His way through, to be reminded that 'if God is for us, who can be against us.' Rom 8:31 This incredible reminder brings the 'peace that surpasses all comprehension, the peace that guards my heart and mind in Christ Jesus.' Philip 4:7

I encourage each of you dear ones to let yourselves be encouraged from God's Truth, His living and active Word, 'For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.' Heb 4:15,16

Want more of Tom's teaching?

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning from 10:30—11:30 PST via Zoom. Send us an email with 'Zoom teaching' in the subject line, and we will email you the Zoom link and Tom's weekly teaching notes. You would be part of a group called the Bereans who are a wonderful bunch of people at GracePointe Church in Milwaukie, Oregon. All are welcome!

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