

Hug Tightly and Persevere with Courage! There IS Hope!

Even in Crazy Times ...

If I was there with you face-to-face I would be giving you a HUGE hug ... (maybe not tightly 😊) but a big hug, a smile and I'd be looking into your eyes.

I truly love to see people's eyes ... making eye contact tells me a lot, I'm sure you agree. It reveals more than we want to say sometimes ... joy-filled eyes, misty eyes, pain-filled eyes, loving eyes, hope-ful eye, weary eyes, eager eyes ... worried and anxious eyes. It has been said "The eyes are the window of the soul."

Matthew 6:22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,"

I have had the blessing of seeing many eyes this summer. Many I know and love ... many I don't know ... yet (there is always a new friend to make!). I have seen many stories in those eyes. Many times, if I know you and there is time on your end and mine, I ask how you are because I care! And yes, there are times that even if I don't know you ... if the Holy Spirit prompts me to ... when I see those precious eyes I ask how you are.

Lest you think I'm over-the-top-nuts 😊 ... I'm talking about times we can reach out to women by seeing something in their eyes for which we have the opportunity to be a potential source of encouragement and DO something as Christians. As a small example of this (I am certain you have many better ones!) a woman I was shopping next to in a local Michael's Store was quietly crying ... yep I asked ... and we ended up praying.

The eyes many women I have interacted with this summer over coaching or ministry or friendship have haunted me ... many are anxious and wondering WHAT do we do with the CRAZINESS going on all around us?

I recognize that I am later than usual in writing my **Gentle Nudgings** this summer but not because I haven't been writing. Oh, I've been writing and writing and writing but I've also been waiting and waiting and waiting on the Holy Spirit on what I should send you!

Why wait? Well, I am a broken woman ... we all are and I have had the full gamut of emotions this month, this summer ...okay the whole year. Emotions over what is happening in lives, in communities, in states, in our country and in your countries as this **Gentle Nudgings** (by the grace and blessing of God) goes to almost every continent.

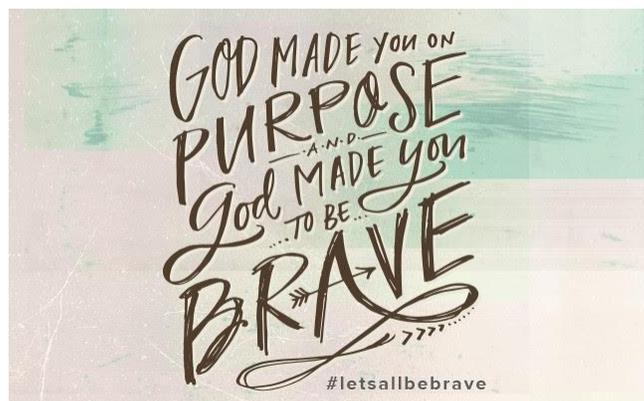
(P.S. This Gentle Nudgings you may want to grab a cup of coffee as it is a wee bit longer ... a bit more to share!)

I have wept when I saw the news about shootings of private citizens in communities and of police officers. I have been angry ... I have been stunned ... I have been horrified by the destruction and murderous terror of ISIS on individuals all over the world (in our country and yours). Does it surprise me that evil and CRAZINESS with individuals or with completely with out of control mobs? No, not really as that is consistent with what we know to be coming in the future via the Word of God.

People are angry and anxious and some may think they are anonymous in their actions and words (spoken in real time or typed) ... and self-control is out the window! For example ... we stopped after church a few weeks ago at a local grocery store on the way home and right in the parking lot an individual for no apparent reason ... a young woman starting screaming horrible words at a couple in their car just a few cars away from us. UGH. What is going on?

Okay ... so it was HOT that day in So Cal! The news was non-stop that people had just been shot (citizens and policemen) and more terrorist attacks had happened in several locations. Politics have been nutty. Tensions are HIGH.

What can we do? Is there anything we can do?



One of my sweet clients recently asked me to write my **Gentle Nudgings** on how we could pray regarding what is going on all around our world as Christians, as followers of Jesus.

Is there hope? Absolutely ... no question! We're talking about the Creator of the Universe!

Psalm 62:5-8 New International Version (NIV)⁵ Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.⁶ Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.⁸ Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

Please look up Isaiah 43:1-5! "...Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze...."

So ... today I will talk to you on 3 topics, in my opinion, about which you and I CAN DO something to impact the craziness:

- 1. DIG DEEPER! Persevere with Courage!**
- 2. PRAY! Persevere with Courage!**
- 3. STAND in the GAP! DO SOMETHING! Persevere with Courage! Hug Someone Tightly!**

Each of these topics is WAY bigger than I can write effectively on in a simple article for down load. Many books on each topic have already been written by well- known authors. This topic is longer than a coaching session. Maybe we could do some justice over a weekend retreat ... but we don't have that luxury. So I will give you some brief things to think about and consider from my heart to yours ... things I have read and learned along the way as a Believer of over four decades.

- 1. DIG DEEPER! Persevere with Courage!**

You cannot give what you do not have. You may ask ...what my point is?

To be transformed and actually BE more like Jesus (Romans 12:2) we need to KNOW what He says in His Word! His Holy Spirit primarily speaks to us through His Word so we need to actually pick up the Bible and read it! Every day.

Remember the Mark Twain quote: "The Man Who Does Not Read Has No Advantage Over the Man Who Cannot Read."

Reading the Word of God helps us to be discerning of counterfeit information coming at us from every direction. As my pastor says ... “Doctrine does matter.” Hearing the Word of God correctly from sources (IE pastors and teachers both written and audio) which handle Scripture accurately is important! Dig Deeper for yourself daily. Dig Deeper as you listen to trusted sources. Dig Deeper as a disciple of Jesus so that you both recognize His small or booming voice and then obey it!

According to Pastor Jim Cymbala in his book Storm: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In in part ... “Surveys also show that there is barely any difference between the lifestyles of Christian churchgoers and the behavior of those who don’t believe in God at all. Yet the Scriptures define believers in Jesus as “saints,” a people who have been separated from the world and belong exclusively to Jesus. Fewer people inside the church believe in the truth and power found in Scripture. An even smaller percentage actively read and apply its truth to their lives. This turning away from Scripture is another calamitous sign.

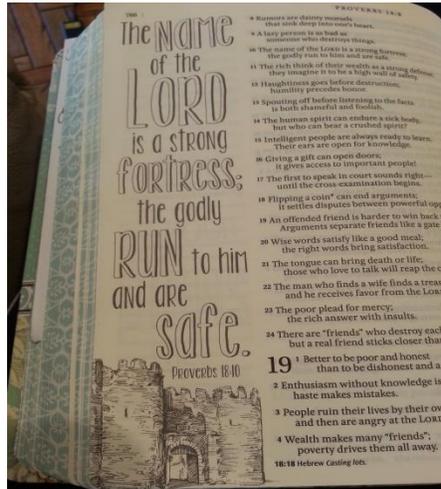
There is a decline in Bible literacy... at first glance it might seem positive that two out of three Americans believe the Bible contains everything a person needs to live a meaningful life. But only one out of five (21 percent) actively read the Bible at least four times a week. Even among churchgoers who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, only 20 percent say they think about it during the day. God has spoken to us through his Word, but fewer are taking the time to listen.”

One of my personal “beefs” lately ... maybe it is just me ... but **please hear me out.**

Here’s the thing ... if we are followers of Jesus that should INFORM our actions, our words, our attitudes and everything else about our lives! (2 Corinthians 5:17) When we ask Christ into our lives that means that we are no longer our own! We are to follow Him as His disciples and act like His ambassadors ... at ALL times! The Bible gives us all the instructions we need and the Holy Spirit fills in every gap. We are NOT anonymous and we need to use self-discipline, obey God, show the gifts and fruits of the Spirit and we are to be DIFFERENT than the world ... not the same!

The Bible tells us to love God with all our hearts, souls and minds and love others as ourselves in Mark 12:28-29. He tells us our lives should exemplify the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is within us ... and these fruits includes self-control and kindness.

That means ... that what we say face-to-face or in an email or on Face Book /Instagram /Tweeting or texting or to our family or friends or strangers is not up to us! We are to be ambassadors of Christ at all times as our first and only “cause!” His love. His peace. His hope. We are to exemplify our faith in Him whether we are all alone with our computer OR in a mob of people! We are His ... we need to ACT as Believers ... not as Believers which could be identified as atheists due to our actions.



Believers! Let us have courage and just follow in Faith and be willing to be different in His name! It doesn't have to make human sense ... and it likely won't make sense. Just watch for the miracles that come with obedience and trust! We are called to be different as we are to be willing to die to ourselves and live out what, how, and why He tells us to. We are not called to be popular. He is God. We are not.

1 John 1:6-7 "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."

2. PRAY! Persevere with Courage!

As I mentioned, one of my precious coaching clients asked me to speak into this topic on this Gentle Nudgings. "How do we pray with all that is going on right now?" I can only tell you my thoughts and perspective as a Christian woman ... a follower of Jesus of a number of decades ... broken and imperfect in many ways (OK ... every way ... but He loves me anyway as His daughter!).

I am re-listening to an audio book Storm: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In by Pastor Jim Cymbala. Wow. Pastor Cymbala discusses the desperateness of Hannah in her prayer in 1 Samuel 2 ... and challenges us to get serious and yes, even get desperate about what is on our hearts. Hannah is an encouragement to actually cry out to God ... and expect Him to answer us!

The Price of Desperation "... Instead of any of those things, Hannah chose a kind of desperate prayer that produced a vow that captured God's heart and also played into his master plan for Israel. As I look at Hannah I am reminded of the scripture from II Chronicles 16:9; "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." In Hannah he certainly found such a heart, didn't he? Her desperate surrendered prayer is one of the greatest in the Bible.

When we look at Hannah we see a woman who paid a price few would willingly pay. Yet after Hannah gave Samuel up to God, the Lord visited her again and gave her three more sons and two daughters. She was abundantly fruitful in her life but it all started with barrenness.

Remember that each person recorded in the Bible is a living example to us, not a dusty old cardboard character long dead. There are Hannah's in the world today and there are purposes of God yet unfulfilled. Maybe he has "closed the womb" for a purpose. Maybe he is looking for desperate ones. Maybe he is longing to release another Samuel on the earth. Barrenness may yet produce fruitfulness in any one of our lives. If we are as "ordinary" as Hannah we can partner with God to produce results that are extraordinary for our own times." (Used with permission) <http://hannahscupboard.com/hannahs-prayer.html>

How do we pray in these uncertain times? My thoughts are not in any way exhaustive.

All I can tell you is that in my prayer life and in my heart I have declared WAR on the enemy. The battlefield is at hand. It IS time to get serious and to show up as Hannahs and Esthers ... "for such a time as this."

Numbers 23:24 says, "These people rise up like a lioness; like a majestic lion they stand."

There is something inside of me ... and likely inside of you ... which feels like a lioness arising right now with all going on! The IRISH in me is STIRRING in a BIG way! It is TIME to arise, to STAND up in His strength, kneel before Him and go forth into this warfare! (Romans 15:2)

If there was ever a time we need to pray ... together ... it is NOW.

In her book Lioness Arising Lisa Bevere “offers the life and image of the lioness as a fierce and tender model for women. Revealing the surprising characteristics of this amazing creature, author Lisa talks to women about: the (collective) lioness being a stunning representation of strength, fiercely protecting its young, lending our voices to the silenced, living in the light and hunting in the dark and ... raising a collective roar of prayer that changes everything. Jesus, after all, is the lion of the Tribe of Judah.”

Here are some bullet points for you to consider on Prayer:



2 Corinthians 10:4 “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”

- You are in the war ... whether or not you want to recognize it or are willing to fight. As Christians living on this earth (heaven being our true home) we are living in “enemy territory.” The enemy of God (satan) is alive and well on this earth and in culture.
- As David Ireland asks in The Weapon of Prayer (pp59) “Are you on a cruise ship or a battleship?”
- Beth Moore is quoted to say “None of us are born brave but we can become brave.”
- We as Christ-followers “fight” differently. We fight in prayer. We fight at the behest of our God. We fight on our knees with spiritual weapons.
- We take our orders from Him. He is our Master, Lord and General.
- Be in warrior condition. Start with repentance. Train. Take dedicated and disciplined time to pray, honor Him with your life, work toward a goal of holiness. Live in a way which produces the fruit of the Spirit. Renew your mind by reading the Word of God. Be self-disciplined to be in warrior (useful) condition. (James5:16 “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”)

- We have protective armor. Put it on daily! Ephesians 6:14-18
- Know how to use your spiritual weapons.
- Know who the enemy is. NAME the enemy. What is the battlefield? Identify it (them)!
- Use Scripture to pray. Pray offensively. Pray defensively. Pray preemptively.
- Prayer is our war cry. We cry out to God for His help, we signal to others to join us, we sound the alarm and signal danger.
- Ask, Seek, Knock Matthew 7:7 Go to your Father expecting Him to hear you and answer.
- Pray for your country! Pray for your leaders! Pray for God's protection over your particular country and for His will as leaders are voted into office.
- Ask someone how you can pray for them!
- What is on your heart? What is the Holy Spirit bringing to your heart in pain or passion? What is troubling you? Pray about it to your Heavenly Father!
- Consider writing down your prayers. Write down the answers when they come. Thank Him for the answers ... Yes, No or Later.
- Oswald Chambers said "Prayer is not preparation for the battle. It is the battle."
- Scriptures to look up: John 16:24, Philippians.4:6-7, Hebrews 4:14-16, Matthew 7:7-8, John 15:7, 1 John 5: 14-15, Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 7:9-11, Psalm 66:18-20

Resources:

Primary and most important resource is the Bible! Pray God's Word!

Other Books: Praying God's Word by Beth Moore, Prayer Warrior by Stormie O'Martian (and her other books on prayer), Fervent: A Woman's Battle Plan for Serious, Specific, and Strategic Prayer by Priscilla Shirer, The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies by Stephen and Alex Kendrick, The Weapon of Prayer by David D. Ireland, Spirit Warriors: Strategies for the Battles Christian men and Women Face Every Day by Stu Weber, A Prayer Warrior's Guide To Spiritual Battle and The Daniel Prayer by Anne Graham Lotz.

Websites:

- <http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org/national-prayer>
- <http://www.awakeningamerica.us> * Would you consider JOINING me for this event on September 11th?

Movie / DVD: War Room! (War Room hat and T-shirt available at Lifeway.com)

3. STAND IN THE GAP! DO SOMETHING! Persevere with Courage! Hug Someone Tightly!

It is NO mistake that you are here at this time in history. What has the Lord laid on your heart to DO? There are directives He has given us all specifically in His Word already. IE Go make disciples, Love God, Love others as yourself, exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and many many more! Is there more?

- What tangible thing can you do TODAY to make a difference in the life of one person in your family, your neighborhood, your church, your school, your work, etc.?
- What do we have in COMMON? How about we look at that component rather than our differences? Be courageous and respectfully be willing to point these common things out.
- Remind other Believers that we have JESUS in common! THE most important fact!
- What about having GRACE for those who have a different opinion? Just taking a deep breath and pray for those we have differences with rather than attacking them?
- Visit YouTube.com and check out “We Are One” by One Voice Children’s Choir! It is powerful and it is true!
- We are easily divided if we are not united. The enemy of God would love that ... not to mention ISIS. If they (ISIS) can keep us divided we are MUCH more vulnerable in ANY country around the world. The same goes for the enemy of God (satan). He intends to DIVIDE us ... as Believers we must stand / kneel UNITED. May we focus on the enemy and not on each other!
- Please Vote if you can in your country! Let the Bible inform your vote ... contrary to popular cultural opinion God’s opinion is the only one that matters. We are His ambassadors doing His will (not necessarily our own) on this side of Heaven. (Remember the question: Are we on a battle ship or a cruise ship?)
- Do Something! Stand in the Gap for someone who has no voice. Stand in the Gap for the Lord. Be courageous and persevere ... and be willing to be different for Jesus!
- **Hug Someone Tightly!** Gary Smalley was quoted many years ago that people need 12 meaningful hugs a day to truly be healthy! If you give a hug ... you’re getting one back! ;) A hug can reduce anxiety and fear.
- Look into the eyes of another woman and authentically ask “How are you” and then listen to what they do say and do not say. BE a friend.
- Check out YouTube.com and search for Amy Grant’s “My Father’s Eyes” ... I truly pray that I have “my Father’s eyes.” ☺
- Check out YouTube.com and look up Matthew West and the song “Do Something!”
- Read DO Something!: Make Your Life Count by Miles McPherson

I personally DO love the Olympics and especially the stories of overcoming we hear! The one-liners are powerful! It has been such a welcome relief from all the craziness of the news cycles! And ... it is wonderful to see so much hugging (!), wonderful competition in the name of sport and unity in athletic excellence as each athlete does their personal best!

If we but Persevered with Courage as the Olympic athletes have in our lives and in our walks with the Lord by 1). Digging Deep 2) Praying and 3) Standing in the Gap and Doing Something ... don't you think we'd collectively make a difference?

A couple of my favorite quotes from the Olympics so far: (I don't who's quotes to give them credit, sorry)

"Success is because of adversity not despite it."

"Storms make trees make deeper roots"

"The hard days are the days that make champions!"

Olympians are admired for their self-discipline and their commitment. Each follower of Jesus is called to the same if not greater levels of those values and ... we are given everything we need to accomplish the challenge we have been given!

1 Corinthians 9:24- (ESV) Biblegateway.com

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

We need to be self-disciplined in our thoughts (Philippians 4:8), our actions, in our words (typed, verbal and unspoken) in our lives. Take a deep breath, trust Him, pray, dig deep and DO what the Holy Spirit beckons you to do. And do it alllll with COURAGE and Perseverance! You CAN make a difference!

We DO have hope! Absolutely! Romans 5:1-5 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we¹ boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we¹ also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Hug Someone Tightly and Persevere with Courage!

Blessings,

Coach Kathleen

Master Certified Christian and Professional Life Coach

www.PersonalRetreatCoaching.com

PS My life verse ... may I suggest you memorize this? Isaiah 41:10 NIV “¹⁰ So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”