

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: IMPROVING ~ Such as do not grow in grace, decay in grace. There is no standing at a stay in religion, either we go forward or backward; if faith does not grow, unbelief will; if heavenly mindedness does not grow, covetousness will. A man that does not increase his stock diminishes it; if you do not improve your stock of grace, your stock will decay. The angels on Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending; if you do not ascend in religion, you descend. ~ T. Watson

GOD'S REDEEMED CHILD A PERSON IN PROCESS PART ONE

God's redeemed child. That phrase flows from my mouth like sweet honey dripping from the honey comb. It stirs my heart and lifts my spirit. It puts a smile on my face. It speaks to me a truth that the enemy cannot steal away. I am God's redeemed child and I have a future. God has laid out wondrous plans for my life. Beloved, this is God's truth for each of His children. It is our promise from the Father above, and He does not lie.

Okay, I understand what God is doing, but what is my part in this promise you may ask. Romans 8:29 tells us—*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...* therefore, we must purpose to become more and more like Jesus Christ by demonstration of our attitudes, words, and actions. We, God's redeemed children, are to live the examples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to do that, we must remember that we are children in process. It doesn't happen overnight, it isn't a one-time event—it is daily submitting to Jesus and to cooperate with Him. Remember that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to us as our Comforter and Teacher and He does a wonderful job. The Holy Spirit comes to our aid and works with us; we are not left alone to our own devices to achieve this. Our responsibility is to cooperate with Him, yield to Him, and to trust Him, as we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works according to Ephesians 2:10. Being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ is a lifelong process. I have served the Lord for over 40 years and I am still a *work in process*.

Oh the promises of God—how precious they are to His children. Meditate on this scripture in Philippians 1:6 that tell us—*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.* He tells us that He will work with His children until our lives on this earth ends. And I'm thinking, *Oh Lord, you don't know the difficulties you will encounter with me because of my selfishness, willfulness, stubbornness and wanting to do things my way. Lord, I need to be purified and refined. I need to be renewed in my mind, emotions, and will. I need to be delivered from doing things my way; from following my own natural inclination. And, I need to not tune out the Holy Spirit's prompting when His advice is in opposition to my desires. Clearly, I need to learn to listen to and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit. Now that's a big list for me to comply with obeying, but Lord, I am the clay and You are the Potter, so continue to work away on me Lord. Don't ever give up on me!*

The trust factor for believers continues to be difficult for many of us. We come from diverse backgrounds, but one thing that many of us have in common is childhood issues (abuse, unforgiveness, anger, abandonment, low self-esteem and the list goes on and on). We must learn to allow His loving wisdom and understanding help move us through difficulties, trails, betrayal, failures, misunderstandings by others, and various testing of our faith. How we respond to these things will build godly character and we will see our trust and confidence grow.

As a new believer in Christ, when I would hear sermons and various teachings on Romans 5:3-5 -*And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*), I would try to tune the words out. I wasn't mature enough to be able to receive them in the right spirit, or have the correct response to them, so these things used by God would develop the godly qualities in me.

Then James comes along and says the same things in chapter 1, verse 2 and 3 (NAS) *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance*. Let me tell you, learning to view my difficulties and trials as something that God can use for my benefit was almost impossible for me to do. It just didn't compute in my way of thinking.

God knew the struggles I was having and that my thought process was under attack by the enemy. Romans 8:28 kept appearing in various things I would read and in sermons I would hear (*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*). God was lovingly, yet faithfully, bringing discipline in my life in order to have the right response which would build godly character. I was learning to walk in His promise of 1 Peter 5:7. I was learning to cast all my care upon Him, for He cares for me. Was this easy to accomplish? Certainly not, but it was part of the process that God knew I must go through.

I was learning to say *Thank You Lord* for being in control of my life, and all circumstances touching me. I could rest in the assurance that I was covered and protected in the middle of any adverse situation; I was able to relax as I trusted in my God, knowing that the end result would be for my good. Through it all, I was drawing closer to God; my relationship was maturing—growing—I was moving in oneness with God. The added benefits—my relationship with others were also growing and I could see positive results happening in not only my life, but in their lives also.

Oh yes, I am still a person in process, but as my oneness with God continues to deepen, and I allow God to love me—I am learning to share myself with others. I am learning to let others into area of my life that before I had closed off, locked up and posted *No trespassers—stay out!* signs over the door of my heart—my emotions. I am learning that I don't have to do that anymore. I am choosing to allow people into those areas and not feel afraid that I would be disappointed, judged, condemned or ridiculed; I had God's peace in soul and spirit. I didn't have to isolate, run away and hide; the loneliness was slowly disappearing and I was becoming confidence in who I was in Jesus. I am not afraid to take risks now. I can be myself in the wholeness I now walk in, and as I do, I see people more comfortable in my presence, as we love, affirm and reassure one another in God.

I am walking in the truth of His love. In the truth that God loves me just as He loves His Son. This love will never end according to Jeremiah 31:3 – *The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you*. Our hearts can rejoice together in another truth—He is a Friend sticks closer than a brother; whose love is unfailing, everlasting, unwavering and will continue steadfast throughout eternity. Jesus is our all in all!

PRAYER:

Loving Heavenly Father, how I praise Your holy name as I come before You each day with thanksgiving flooding my soul and delighting my heart. You are my mainstay, my strength, my joy for the day. You keep me walking in Your holy truth that holds my feet to the right paths and strengthens my resolve to not turn aside from what You have led me to achieve. My life is turned around in You. My heart is clean and I purpose to walk in a right spirit as I encounter various difficulties and trials in this life on earth. Thank You for accepting me fully, as Your beloved child, for even though You know all about my failings, my weaknesses, my sins, my conflicts and frustrations, You continue to love me unconditionally. You believe in me Jesus, and that allows me to believe in myself.

Thank You, Father, for You has searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. (Psalm 139:1-4) I praise Your holy name as you continue to love and guide me through each day. I am Yours for all eternity and my heart is singing out Your praises in thanksgiving for who You are and who I am in You. Amen!