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Association and Life

This is totally new to me and does not fall within my comfort zone, but somehow I said, "yes" after Guenna applied a little pressure. It is a good thing for me to put thoughts in writing & I will probably glean more than anyone else. Quite a bit of what I say, you will have heard before, but for myself I never get tired or bored of hearing something again. Most generally, it's presented from the life living in that person and stirs that life living in me. I love that.

Last week I texted Julie G. & mentioned by doing this is making me feel more connected to the body. She agreed with me.

I want to give a little bit about who I am since many of you do not know me at all. My husband & I both grew up & lived in a small fairly religious community in IA. We both grew up going to church. My husband & I were involved with the Charismatic movement in '72 after we were first married and went to all kinds of meetings trying to "experience" more of Him. We later helped start a nondenominational fellowship in our small community. I would have to admit, I thought I had it pretty much together!

We moved to KC in '98 to be closer to two of our four kids & to be part of a large fellowship in KC. It happened to be the same church Jason had been connected to.

After being pretty involved for several years, I was driving home from "church" by myself since my husband had some leadership responsibilities. I was driving along and it was like a thunderbolt hit me and I said out loud, "I can't do this anymore!"

It wasn't anything anyone had done, but I knew I couldn't go on. That was the abrupt end of the formal "church" which had played a big part of my life up to that time.

Several weeks later, I ran into a lady at Wal-Mart that I knew a little and she started telling me what she was learning about & how it was changing her life. She was not an outspoken person but something had animated her and she talked & talked as we stood in the middle of the aisle at Wal-Mart. For some reason I listened & didn't blow her off.

I was pretty disillusioned at that time. Needless to say it was Jason's teachings she was

talking about. She started giving me CD's & reading material.

One morning I got a glimpse of light. I had never seen the cross as the division it was. It had always been Christ loved me & forgave me for my sins and it was pretty much up to me how "I" lived that out or a particular church taught at the time. I was taught the more I read my Bible & prayed, fasted & whatever would make me a better Christian. For the first time I saw how wrong I had been, not only for myself but for what I had shared with my kids & others. I didn't see the death of my old carnal man, my old nature & the new life in Christ freely given to me. I saw the darkness & emptiness of what I thought was life. How incredibly sad & naive.

Music CD's & books went out the door. I couldn't read the Bible for quite awhile. I realized I didn't have the spiritual glasses for it. But I did start writing the new truths on my bathroom walls, in permanent marker, no less. My grandkids wondered why Grandma was writing on her walls. I'm sure my adult kids did also. My spiritual glasses needed to be totally, totally changed. It was like I was seeing for the first time.

In all honesty, it could have been preached & I just didn't hear, I don't know. I couldn't seem to connect my mind around that we died with Him. I didn't see it was our old man, our old nature that died with Him.

I still "feel" like such an infant which makes me all the more grateful that Christ is intent upon drawing & revealing Himself to me. To all of us that are hungry. As Jared said in one of his latest Roman teachings, "it's not that this is something new or deeper but actually the ABC's of Christianity. It's what we are to see from the beginning." I read that and thought, wow, how true.

This isn't something we add to what we already know, but it's foundational to the very core! There's two thoughts that have been speaking to my heart that I would like to share. Something I couldn't understand for many years was—if God is the God of love which is most generally preached, what are all the stories about where there is an enormous amount of killing & death? For example, the story of Achan where he took things from the enemy when they were specifically told not to. He hid them beneath his tent & ended up dying for it. I can still hear Julie G. saying in one of her lessons, "Poor Achan". But not only was Achan killed, but his whole family. I want to say, "His poor family. They didn't do anything!"

Another example I want to mention is Daniel. We know Daniel was miraculously saved from the lions. But then in Daniel 6:24 it says, "the king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel & they cast them, their children, & their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them & crushed all their bones." Again, not only were the men

thrown in, but their whole families, including the children.

Also, Joshua & the Israelites taking the land—none were to be spared.

Again, during the flood, all were destroyed except Noah & family. These are stories we're familiar with & there are many more.

Recently, Sarah Bishop used the word "association" in her teaching about Noah. Noah was the only righteous BUT because of their association with Noah, because they shared Noah's blood, his three sons & wives were saved from the flood. The word association stood out to me. Just as Noah's sons were spared because of who they were associated with, in the same way Achan's family was destroyed because of who they were associated with.

Joseph's family, his brothers, wives & children were spared during the famine because of their association with Joseph.

So, it started to raise some thoughts. Our association IS a big factor as those stories so clearly state. When we see ourselves in Him, associated with Him, seated with Him, one with Him—it's like we're in a Noah's ark. Not because of anything we did, but because of our death on the cross with Him and being seated with Him. Seeing ourselves one with Him. There doesn't seem to be a middle ground. You're either in the ark or out of it.

Just as in the stories I mentioned, it was a matter of physical life or death depending on who they were associated with. In the spiritual realm, the same thing. It's a matter of life or death. The division of the cross makes a way for new life in Him.

Jason helped me see when I asked him about the brutality (he used the word severity). He said, "the cross doesn't leave anything standing. God used their death as a picture for us of the death in our soul. The types & shadows were severe, but the reality in our souls is far more severe."

That's a pretty profound statement.

I should probably end right there but I'm going to include one more short. thought. We know we have a new life in Him and old things have passed away, but in life I don't always see myself there. Again, Abraham's story brought encouragement to me recently. Abraham tells Sarah to say she is his sister.

My question has been, how could he do that? Jason addressed that recently in an Old Testament class teaching by saying Abraham's heart had turned back to Egypt. But the good part is when Abraham was called out on his deceit & was sent away, he went up to

Negev. In Genesis 13: 3 & 4 it says, "to the place of the alter, which he had made there formerly; and there Abraham called on the name of the Lord."

Abraham wasn't exempt from doing wrong, but when he did, he turned back to the alter. Knowing my heart can turn just as quickly, it brought encouragement to me when I saw the faithfulness of God in continuing to bring Abraham's heart back to the light, back to the land where it belonged.

My heart was overwhelmed with the love God has for his people. It is not to keep us from this or that or make us feel all excited & to have a good life here on this earth but to continually pull our hearts back to see Him.

So I will end with some questions. Who do I see myself associated with? Is it a belief or a reality? Do I see myself in the ark? That's where Christ sees me, in Him. He doesn't see me coming in & going out depending on what's happening in my life. Think about the story of Noah & family. They were in the ark with no way of leaving the ark & coming back in. They were in! What a type & shadow of where we are.

Secondly, am I willing to humble myself & accept what God has to offer by turning back to the alter when I have turned back to the old.