

**Some “Re5” articles I wrote, as His Spirit spoke with me during the day, as a mother and shepherdess
2010-2012 or so. (By CQ)**

Re5 001: Abra-cadabra--Poof!

A mysterious happening! Last weekend my husband and I took our young children to a large science museum. It was filled with people, and has many floors and rooms. A pretty complex place. When I sat down to nurse my baby in a quiet room, it was then that I noticed my phone wasn't in its case—an arm band type holder. We looked in all the places in the building that we had been, and asked at “lost and found” if a phone had been turned in. I looked in my purse and in the baby stroller. It wasn't to be found. Then I remembered my birthday promise. (It was my birthday the day before.) I had promised that as much as I could do it, NO MATTER WHAT happened to me throughout this next year I would strive to utter a positive word about it. I would thank God for it, no matter what.

There wasn't anything more I could think of saying for this situation, besides, “Thank You, Lord, that my phone got lost...” after which I was then busy and focused in the care of our little ones. My husband then said he'd take the baby, and go to fill out a form stating what was lost, our contact information, and so forth, in case it showed up later on. He planned to put the baby in the stroller which was parked outside the room we were in, but within seconds he had come back. The phone, as odd as it seemed was sitting there in the stroller!

It was almost as if I had said the magic words! It isn't those kind of strollers that are cozy and luxurious and it could slip down somewhere out of view. It is a very flat, twin seater stroller, with no top cushion, or blanket. Miracles happen! And I trust more will happen as I utter the magic words of possessiveness & gratitude.

I stopped trying to think that everything needs to make sense before I praise God for it. Nor do I need to have a groundswell in my heart of happy feelings. I just simply say “Thank You” if I can't actually think of a string of reasons why some seemingly bad situation could be good. If I can't see anything good at all, I trust and thank God anyway, and leave the “working the magic” up to Him.

I'm sure Mary & Joseph as they took residence in the stable, didn't have too many great thoughts about it. But we can see now how perfect it was, in showing to the world the humility of God, and His becoming poor so that we all could relate and become rich in His love, regardless of our situation. He took away all excuses by starting out in a lowly state. But we can see now how right-on Mary would have been were she to have said, “Thank You, God, that there wasn't room in the inn for us. This is Your perfect place for baby Jesus to be born. I'm so glad for the good that will come out of this unexpected and rather uncomfortable place to be giving birth in. It's all good!”

Re5 009: “I want that pacifier!” (& Shoes!)

Sometimes we think, and are convinced that there is something we absolutely must have, that it is the answer to our problem, that it is a real need, but God knows better. We seldom think so at the time. But time has a great way of sorting things out. We just need to be patient.

My baby was tired, hungry and thirsty. All he needed was a good nurse and cuddle before a nap. He was vigorously sucking on his pacifier, and since his eyes were nearly all the way shut he couldn't see that there was anything else, something better I was offering. No matter how much he sucked on that pacifier, he felt no nourishment. I had to pull hard to release it, and be able to satisfy his real need. He didn't know what I had in mind. He thought I was taking away the only small bit of comfort he had left. But in time—and for him it was only a matter of a few seconds—he saw that it was all for the best, and was happier for it.

It reminded me of myself, getting my eyes and heart so fixed on something I thought I needed, when all the while there was something better ready to be given to me. I just had to give up what was in my hand (or what I wanted to be in my hand) and hold out for what Jesus knew was better. The most recent time I can remember was a few months ago.

My account below is a very down-to-earth example. But maybe there's something in your life or heart that you can relate this too—a painful or bothersome health challenge you wish would end, a longed for loved one or heart breaking separation, change and travel dreamed of, specialized needs for you or your children, legalities sorted out and granted, a difficult personality to face day after day, physical or emotional needs gone without for what seems like way too long, moral support & camaraderie, or whatever is “waiting on ice” for a solution or relief. I pray it can give you comfort to know that the best may be “just around the corner”. God's not blind nor forgetful. He'll answer in the best way and time, with what we need.

The Shoes

In this part of the world it was the middle of a cold winter, and I had no shoes! Now when I say “none” I mean I had a pair of flip flops for house use and a pair of thin suede moccasins with ripping seams, for trying to look nice when traveling or whatnot. The one pair of tennies I had were beginning to evolve into some new type of shoe, the holes were getting so big. And my feet had now gotten an ailment due to these and other old and improper shoes. So for the betterment of my feet I had to chuck them. To me it seemed to be a very big need, and should be an easy one to grant, from a God who “holds the cattle on a thousand hills”. We looked for long hours in many shops, I prayed, a friend gave her extra shoes... but still there was nothing that fit me, or fit our price range. I was looking for a “one type suits all” type of shoe. —So we'd only have to buy one pair! But anything in my size and that was quality enough to last a bit, was outrageous in price. And anything on sale didn't fit!

The need seemed so apparent to me. Just hanging the laundry outside took me an hour to thaw my toes out again. And we were going on a 1 ½ week trip, traveling and staying in a motor home, in the winter. I was looking forward to the trip, but it seemed an absolute that I'd need shoes! I begged. I pleaded with God. I saw no reason for this clearly desperate need being delayed. Well, the trip came and went, and I survived it with my flip flops and ripping moccasins when needed.

Then an odd happening. I was walking near some shops, after getting veggies for the week, and I noticed a sign saying there were shoes for sale. The moment I pondered it, wondering if I should go in, a person walking beside me said clearly enough for me to also hear, “Shoe shop!” Obviously noticing it too, at that split second. And yes, it was the time for the miracle. I was in and out of the shop in a matter of minutes with a perfect fit and type and color—and price! Ahh! At last.

But then it began to unfold, the understanding, the reason for the delay in getting shoes up till then. I discovered that I was unable to wear these new shoes for more than a short while at a time, without it causing me a lot of discomfort. My feet still needed more time to heal. If I had gotten those oh-so-cool million-dollar shoes, I wouldn't have been able to use them anyway, and it would have made my condition unbearable trying to wear them too often. I would have sorely regretted (pardon the pun) the decision to get them then. I saw His wisdom now. And thanked Him for denying me what I was convinced I needed. So I donned my flip flops, braved the cold, and gave healing time. But I also had the miracle pair to use when I needed something more suitable. I'm healed now, and I thank the Lord for saying “no” and “wait” and giving me first what I truly needed. “He knows He loves He cares... He gives the very best to those who leave the choices up to Him.”

Re5 011: Grace for the Space

Last night I was reminded of this poem I'd heard put to music many years ago. I held on to it. It had been a "bumpy" past few days, as I call it. The concept of being able to act gracefully, with easy politeness, being non-ruffled by things, is a great goal. To after a long day of trying to please, and still hearing yet more complaining from the little ones, to smile and try to make things nice; to accept yet another disappointment and "hoped for" not working out, cheerfully; to realize that every goal and "priority" of the day wasn't reached, and to remember that as long as the goal of acting in love is reached, that really is the priority.

Well, I didn't attain, but somehow even the times of falling short, apologizing and making things right again help keep our hearts tender and our friendships close, and work to create a stronger desire to hold on to that "grace" for next time.

Some meanings of the word "grace":

- beauty or charm of form, composition, movement, or expression
- an attractive quality, feature, manner, etc.
- a sense of what is right and proper; decency
- thoughtfulness toward others
- goodwill; favour
- mercy; clemency

Today I pray that I will show:

Grace when the sun is shining Lord,
Grace when the sky is black,
Grace when I get the unkind word,
Grace on the too-smooth track,
Grace when I'm elbowed into a nook,
Grace when I get my turn,
Grace when the dinner will not cook,
Grace when the fire won't burn.
Grace when my duties all go wrong,
Grace when they all go right,
Grace when it's gladness, praise and song,
Grace when I have to fight,
Grace when my clothes are fresh and new,
Grace when they're worn and old,
Grace when my purse is empty too,
Grace when it's full of gold.
Grace when the saved ones don't act saved,
Grace when they outshine me,
Grace when denied the good I've craved,
Grace when I get my plea,
Grace when the midnight hours I tell,
Grace when the morn is nigh,
Grace when I'm healthy, strong and well
Grace when I come to die.

--Author Unknown

Re5! 017: What if...?

If the trees were tired of standing in the same place, bored of doing the same thing day after day, year after year, we'd have only deserts.

If the sand on the beach, and the surrounding land felt dry and wished people would stop stepping all over it, then we'd have floods.

If the water in the world wished for a break from constantly being needed to help people and refused to be on the move, moved here and there with tides, waves, trickling springs and brooks, flowing rivers, dams, irrigation for farming, water pumps, pipes, kitchen taps, taken from wells, poured out, turned into clouds and then rain, freezing and melting, needing to change and move according to the seasons and needs, it would be the end of life as we know it.

Some days we'll feel dry and lacking the spark and inspiration that we wish we'd have; other days will be boring and we'll wish for change and excitement; other days we'll feel so tired of the constant needs to fill, the never ending "pouring out"; some days we'll feel a lack of appreciation from others; but let's learn from nature and keep on going, keep on loving, keep on giving to those who need us.

Re5! 023: Unforgettable people I met...

There are some people that upon the memory of them always help me to count my blessings. Meeting them in their situation was an unforgettable encounter.

On a rainy day, with bags on our shoes to keep the deep mud from covering them, we delivered donated cake to poor families at their houses. Out of one version of a house, with only a cloth for the door, came a 12 year old girl, to accept the food for her and her several younger siblings. She was now responsible for them, as her remaining parent—mother—was in hospital. It was a large cake and we were giving parts of it away to each family. We asked her for a plate or tray to put their portion on... they didn't have one. We found a way.

A family with 11 children. The father was currently out of a job. There was no running water in their one-room house. [Literally one room, four walls, that was it.] We delivered a box of food supplies to the grateful family.

On the same day we brought a box to another family. They too were very poor. Their family had a unique way of dealing with the food shortage. The children and family members simply took turns eating—not meals, but days. One day some ate, the next day was the other's turn. Our gift box must have gone a long way and been so appreciated.

So what was I complaining about... I forgot. It doesn't really matter, anyway.

The Shiny Green Stone

It didn't seem fair to me at the time. I was 10 years old. I don't think it's just children that have an inbuilt balance alarm system that seems to ring when it appears that someone else is getting something better than you—whether it be health, or wealth, family situation or skills and job opportunities. There will ALWAYS be someone who seems to have it easier or get the better fortune. But that Sunday in the mountains Brazil, my alarm seemed to go off extra loudly. I and my friends were exploring our "backyard". Our mountain house had a great property, spacious, and filled with nature wonders.

“Look what I found!” my friend, said as she pulled a shiny green rock out of the dirt. We all were amazed, and then felt somewhat sad that we hadn’t encounter such a treasure. It was about the size of half her hand. I don’t actually know the name of that kind of special stone. Maybe one day I’ll encounter it again.

Vigorously we all got to work digging in the same location, just in case there were more of them. We couldn’t believe it when another one was found—this time much bigger, about 8 times the size of the last one. The only problem was, it was found by the same girl!

What? She finds them both? None others were found that day by us. See the rules we played by were, whoever finds it, gets to keep it. And even if she were to give it to one of us, we didn’t have that thrill of being the “discoverer”. I questioned at that age, why God would be so unbalanced to us. One special rock that only she got was hard enough. Now two, and bigger—and my brothers, and the rest of our friends found none?

That childhood memory sat in the back of my mind for years. I couldn’t resolve it, so I let it rest. Many years past, we moved, they moved, we lost contact, then had children of our own. I heard bits of news a few years ago how things were going for her. She was a single mom now, with a couple of children. Though she was happy and had friends that helped her, I couldn’t help think about my dear husband. I’d waited long—and given up hope—for someone so perfect for me. I thank God every day for him. And so do our three wonderful children. I can imagine if she observed our family there could be feelings of “not fair” in her mind. Because things just don’t seem perfectly “equal” to every human on this planet. We are all individuals, and each have a separate-style journey through life.

I’m glad now that she found the rocks, all of them—and hope and pray, and somehow think, that in His love, God has seen fit to bring out the balance in her life, to show His love. That “unfair” balance at the time, taught me that He sees farther than this moment, and eventually does balance things out, in personalised ways. Maybe to me I seem to have it better than her, now, but because He let her find those precious stones then, gives me faith that He’s sent other “special rocks” her way as the years go on, that have made her feel loved.

Balance of “good things” comes, in time, I think to all. But can’t always be measured or seen. Some treasures—actually the ones that count the most—are probably the invisible ones. The gifts He gives to our heart and soul. And remember this life isn’t the all-in-all— just one piece of the puzzle. “The best is yet to come”, as we give him our hearts and lives here and now.

Slow progress?

Does it seem like any progress is hard to come by and you don’t have much to show for all your efforts? Ponder these notable facts on some plants as I did. God doesn’t seem to be in a hurry, nor only wishing for fast, showy proofs of success of other parts of His creation. Just staying at it and doing what we’re meant to do, day after day, year after year—being “faithful”—regardless of visible outcome, seems more the name of the game and what scores points.

Bristlecone pines grow very very slowly, often only a millimetre or two a year. (And can live for thousands of years.)(Research found me this: “Bristlecone pines grow in isolated groves at and just below the tree line. Because of cold temperatures, dry soils, high winds, and short growing seasons, the trees grow very slowly. The wood is very dense and resinous, and thus resistant to invasion by insects, fungi, and other potential pests.)

Welwitschias plants grow only in one African desert. Each welwitschia produces only two leaves in its lifetime and it may live for 2,000 years. The longest and biggest leaves recorded were eight meters long

and two meters wide.

New plants have been grown from 1,000 year old **lotus seeds**. Their seedcases were so hard, scientist had to dissolve them first with sulphuric acid.

This next one is from "RAISING POSITIVE KIDS IN A NEGATIVE WORLD--By Zig Ziglar"

You gotta hang in there! All children need to learn the story of the Chinese bamboo tree. My friend Joel Weldon, an outstanding speaker from Phoenix, Arizona, tells the story. The Chinese plant the seed; they water & fertilise it, but the first year nothing happens. The second year they water & fertilise it, & still nothing happens. The third & fourth years they water & fertilise it, & nothing happens. The fifth year they water & fertilise it, & sometime during the course of the fifth year, in a period of approximately six weeks, the Chinese bamboo tree grows roughly 90 feet.

The question is, did it grow 90 feet in six weeks or did it grow 90 feet in five years? The obvious answer is that it grew 90 feet in five years, because had they not applied the water & fertiliser each year there would have been no Chinese bamboo tree.

Re5! 031: When do you call it quits or "failure"? –Emma & John Withnell never did.

I recently read a true life story about a couple who were pioneers and settlers in Northern Australia. It gave me a great boost of inspiration and energy. Their determination to carry on, regardless of major and repeated set-backs, great difficulties and hardships, while providing and caring for 11 children, was stirring. They kept their faith in God and sense of humour through it all. Emma and John Withnell didn't have the word "failure" or "quit" in their dictionary or mindsets. Here are a few notes I took from their story:

Emma Mary Withnell and John Withnell, 1864, while she was 6 months pregnant and with 2 children moved their entire farm on a ship to set up and pioneer in Australia. The ship was shipwrecked, and only about 1/6 was left of their livestock.

They never made it to their original destination. But made a homestead closer to where they landed. Off to a rough start they got busy, and kept at it.

They had 11 children over the years.

John was a great farm worker but illiterate. Emma taught him how to read and write.

Fruit and vegetables were rare or non-existent.

All the births of the babies were done without help, besides her husband and at times her sister. No doctors of any kind around.

Cyclones, drought, fire repeatedly destroyed their houses (all which had to be built and rebuilt by hand, using the rough materials available.)

At one point, 4 months after a cyclone, Emma had twins. She had 5 children besides them to care for. Their house was still not completed at that time. Somehow they managed.

Emma's husband died at 75 years old, and she out-lives him yet another 30 years, busy and active. All 11 of her children were still growing, and thriving in their own lives, and having children of their own.

In conclusion:

The setbacks and difficulties I read about were too numerous to list here. But they just kept on. Others left the area, but they never called it "failure" or "too hard". They sailed with 650 healthy sheep, when beginning their journey, but due to the shipwreck had been left with only eighty-four ewes, two rams, a horse and a cow. After many years of hard work and not losing hope, courage and determination they possessed 20,000 sheep, 130 horses and 150 head of cattle and were regarded as very successful pioneers.

When the Healer Comes

Here are the lyrics of a song that's given my heart a balm of strength during those times of ongoing pain. Have you had those times where you just wish it would stop, and it seems nothing helps? It could be physically, or hurts of the heart, turmoil, painful memories, or whatever your personal "need healing" situation is. We all need healing—of body, or mind, or emotions, or whatever. I pray this helps you too.

WHEN THE HEALER COMES

I see you searching to find relief in a sea of pain
Reaching for answers of why your life had to be this way
Can't face the fear that grows in your mind
That life goes on and leaves you behind
Don't know how long you can keep on waiting
For some light to shine

When it's been so long since you felt no pain
When your hopes are dim and your dreams seem vain
When your world is dark and your night is long
And there's no sign of the morning sun
When you're all alone, no-one seems to care
Even the prayers you pray seem to go nowhere
Faith will find a way if you don't give up
Everything will change when The Healer comes

Let Jesus draw near you
There is healing touch in those tender hands
Yes He can hear you
His heart has suffered and understands
That the lessons that we learn in the dark
Are the ones that make us all that we are
And His presence shines like an angel in your lonely night

When it's been so long since you felt no pain
When your hopes are dim and your dreams seem vain
When your world is dark and your night is long
And there's no sign of the morning sun
When you're all alone,
no-one seems to care
Even the prayers you pray seem to go nowhere
Faith will find a way if you don't give up
Everything will change when The Healer comes

When the answer does not come right away
That's the time to hold on to faith
Cause there's no question The Healer will keep His Word
And every desperate prayer is heard

3-1-2011

Sticking around

What makes the difference between a nut and full grown tree? Sticking to its place, over a long enough period of time. It just kept on going, one day at a time, until it is the tree we see today. Growth can't be seen in a day either. It's so gradual and slow. It's worth pondering.

Here are some more thoughts:

Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there. — *Josh Billings*

The greatest things ever done on earth have been done little by little. — *Thomas Guthrie*

You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you. — *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

One man has enthusiasm for 30 minutes, another for 30 days, but it is the man who has it for 30 years who makes a success of his life. — *Edward B. Butler*

Lord, make me brave...

Feb 3, 2011

Lord, make me brave...

To see another relishing a joy I've long wished for, and without sadness being truly glad for them.

To give up some time I'd been banking on to fill a certain need in my life, work, mission, to help with an unexpected need or wish of another.

To love, again, even when still feeling the sting of hurt from my previous attempts to "love one another".

To enjoy watching others doing those things I've always wanted to do, but can't, because time and ability hinder me.

To give up that close friend, and move to where the need calls me, and to just be glad that I did have a friend to say was mine.

To feel the blow of my own foolish mistake, and not to harshly berate myself, but smile, knowing I'm a wiser, more experienced, and thus useful individual now.

To nearly "have and hold" the treasure I've been hoping for, only to see another whisk it away before it is mine, and to still have hope that "the best is yet to come", without anger or bitterness towards them.

To see or realise God's hand is in all things for good. To not despair no matter how evil things might appear. He will turn all things around, in the end. All will be made perfect. To think it, believe it, speak it, remember it, no matter what harsh circumstances befall me.

To enjoy all things, no matter how mundane, taxing, draining, or common they may seem. Just being glad to be alive and well enough to do anything at all. Many long for the pleasure of all I do get to experience.

"Never forget that life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely and gallantly, as a splendid adventure in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to face many a danger, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and lose many a battle." — *Annie Besant, English peace and social justice advocate*

"We could never learn to be brave and patient if there were only joy in the world." — *Helen Keller*

"Things don't go wrong and break your heart so you can become bitter and give up. They happen

to break you down and build you up so you can be all that you were intended to be.” —Charles
“Tremendous” Jones, *Motivational speaker*

For Every Breath

How do you think positively when you get hit with a sudden difficult-to-handle problem, deep sorrow, long and hard to beat illness, life changing loss, unbearable pain, or emotionally wrenching situation? It can feel like it takes as much effort as it would to jump off a 10 meter high Olympic diving board, backwards with a blindfold on, into ice-cold freezing water. You just can't muster up the words to say, or to think on the good. But we can prepare now, so that the jump isn't that high, and the water not so cold. And perhaps we can even stare it in the face, and boldly make the leap.

By praising for every breath—there are many who can't do just that, unaided.

By being glad for every blink and sound—should you be abundantly blessed to both see AND hear, you're envied by many.

By being in awe at the wonder of every step, or movement of hands or body—if your sudden loss hasn't left you both completely paralyzed and in a coma, you are way ahead of the game by those who only dream of doing (or having their loved ones do) what you can do.

By enjoying every sip, bite, swallow—there are countless many who would give anything just to be able to, but lack the food, water, health or ability to do so. If you're not hooked up to a drip, you're blessed!

By having gratitude for every word you can speak, and choosing them well. Many cannot. Language barriers, strokes, disabilities, aging related illnesses, deafness, or just being a baby. If you are well and keen enough to not only make yourself heard, but likewise understood, ah, what ease!

Gratitude—for Dummies

You look in the mirror and the sight is brining you down. Wait, did you say, “sight”? You can see, for goodness sake. I'd give anything to trade places with you—I'm blind!

You stub your toe and begin to choose a random phrase for such sudden pain—Did you move your toe yourself, or did someone swing it for you as you sat in your wheelchair? You mean you were just walking or running...? Give me legs! I lost them in the war. I'll take any toe stub. It would make me smile, reminding me with joy that I have some.

That obnoxious person did it again. They know just the words to say that really get on your nerves. It doesn't matter what you are doing, if they are in the room there is sure to be something said that gets to you. Hearing the words of others? Did you say hearing? I've been deaf all my life. I've never heard a song. I've never known the soothing sounds of nature. I think I could block out the hurt of others' words, I'd just be so glad I could hear even the sound of my own name being spoken.

Your computer crashed. The long document you have been working on got lost. The thought of starting again from scratch makes you exhausted, makes you mad. Ah, but you can! I was born a quadriplegic. I can't just walk up to the computer and jot a note anytime I want. I'd do your work twice over, three times over, just for the sheer joy of being ABLE to. What a rush!

You've been up all night holding the baby. He's been fussing and crying. You're too tired to keep your eyes all the way open, you're hoping your arms won't give way and you'll be able to make it through the next day, and night, and next day, and on it goes. My arms ache to hold my little one. He passed away last spring. I stay awake at night. I cry, I miss holding him so. Hold him while you have him. Enjoy each moment.

You are rushing along the highway, and a traffic accident has blocked the road. It's getting backed up. You will be late. You're starting to fume. Did you say you were in an accident? Oh, you're fine? Your children are safe in the car, with you? How blessed. I was in the car ahead, on my way to meet my family after being away for so long. Guess I got too tired from the trip. We'll all have to wait. I hope the hospital stay won't be too long, and that with the help of a wheelchair I'll be able to get around, and with therapy I'll be able to speak clearly again.

The wet beds to change and the laundry to wash just seem to be endless. Washing that bedding yet again. You throw it in the machine. Let me get this straight, you just put it in, and bingo it gets clean--and fresh water is readily available. The life of ease and luxury. I have to walk a mile to the nearest water pump. Carrying it back to our humble abode isn't easy. Water pouring out in your own house, and not have to do the scrubbing and rinsing yourself of your laundry! I can only dream... What would I do with all that time on my hands?

Re5! 102: Life's Album

Each day is like a song, a new one, in a long variety-filled album. There are countless genres and styles included. Some songs are soft, some are loud. Some have a catchy beat, others sound more like monotone lounge music. Some are quiet instrumentals, others are heartfelt and deeply moving. Some blend with your thoughts, others sound otherworldly. Each song, each day, holds its own beat, its unique rhythm, its specially created melody.

If I wake trying to sing yesterday's song it will sound off key. If I dance with the moves of the music gone by, I'll be out of step with today's needs and adventures. If I long for a melody that today might not hold, I'll miss hearing today's unique musical experience.

I'll pause as the day dawns, realizing that the song of today may be unlike anything I've danced to before. I'll put on my dancing shoes of readiness to "get with the beat" of whatever it brings, and make the best of it that I can. I'll lay aside my "it worked yesterday" party clothes, and don what's appropriate for today—flashy or humble.

I'll just hold real still for a minute before jumping in to dance, and listen for the melody and rhythm, and the words that give the feel of the song for today. And if I keep open, and keep listening, keep ready to flow, I'll stay in step with the beat. I'll get that fulfillment, that joy, as the song and day draws to a close. My actions will have blended with the song of the day.

I may want each day to be the same, or at least predictable. I may want the cool things that brought a smile to my face, to grace me yet again. I may want the solutions that worked before to my children's challenges to be the "lived happily ever after" magic that brings all we'd need till the end of time.

But if I struggle, trying to dance the way I want things to go, it just won't jibe. I'll end the day exhausted, frustrated, and uninspired. I have to realize the songs change. The album continues playing.

I don't make the music. The creator of my soul does. The One Who's orchestrating things for me will bring to my life only the best as I love and trust Him, as I sing in tune and dance in step with Him, one unique and beautiful day at a time.

Re5! 109: The vacuum cleaner, the nozzle, or both?

After several attempts at trying to figure out what my 1 year old was trying to express, I finally got it. Well, actually, my instincts told me what it was, right at the start. But I didn't want to do it, or believe it was what he wanted. So I was hoping he'd be interested in something else.

But after much pleading, and sounds, and all the ways he could figure out to communicate, at last I tried it. Ah, it was perfectly what he wanted.

He wanted to hold the long spare vacuum cleaner nozzle attachment, and vigorously try to clean under a chest of drawers, while the vacuum was on nearby—not attached, no, of course not! Just hearing the sound made him know it was “working” and he got to work, with all his might.

I tried to turn it off, but that would never do. He wanted to clean, and of course he couldn't do it if I so carelessly turned it off! As long as the sound was on, he was sure all was great—even though the hose it was supposed to attach to was a meter away.

I thought about it. It was easy for it to remind me of myself. Those days when I work so hard, and yet nothing notable seems to be done—in fact I look a few paces back than when I started off. Then I figure, if goals aren't being reached, it's because I'm not working hard enough! I just have to try harder! And so I do, and I commit to the whole day, any time I get to accomplish, do, finish, finally!

Then the day ends, and I'm really no further along. Tired, discouraged from having given it my best and all, and even that not being good enough. What to do?

Guess the hose wasn't attached.

I need to remind myself that my most vigorous efforts will only tire me and not do the job, if I'm not hooked up to the power source. I think I've found prayer—proactive prayer especially—to be one of the most effective ways to hook up. The days I pray more, more happens more smoothly.

Course I think I'm always praying, and I know I need God to help, so I'm calling on Him frequently as things come up. But when I really stop, and take more than just a minute to pause and commit details and all aspects of the day, and each of my children, to Him, it just makes a difference—surprisingly so. Though by now I really should be surprised if it doesn't.

It might not make every “wishing to get done today” thing accomplished—cause, well, I like to aim pretty high. But at least I know that the most important things on HIS list are more likely to get done, if I'm working with Him, and giving Him permission to work in our lives, through inviting Him and His power to take us through the day.

And then I can relax more. I've given it over to Him, so I do what I can, but if it all doesn't happen like I want things to, well, moving my arms more vigorously, and “vacuuming harder” won't do the job better. I need to make sure I'm hooked up, turn up the power to “full”, and pray like I know it works and like I can depend on it to bring through the best results.

Re5! 113: Spunky Salad Mix

While fixing one of my favourite salad dishes I've concocted, my mind drifted off to a rather difficult part of my life. Minds can be a multi-ring circus. Or as my son put it when asking him a question at our talk time (when he'd needed some tweaking in behaviour):

Son: I was thinking all these good things, and good words to say (but then hadn't done/ said them... I guess)

(A minute later on why he'd acted less than the best, in spite of his "good intentions" he was proclaiming to have:)

Son: Well, I was thinking all these rough thoughts, and that I just wanted things for myself.

Me: I thought you said you were thinking good thoughts?

Son: My mind is very big! As big as a phone wire! It wraps all around me!

Anyway, happy as I was, looking forward to enjoying a yummy treat, I began to go to the "no fly zone" wondering why and wishing things hadn't felt like it was boot camp training emotionally and physically in the first years of motherhood, with all the particulars that added to the drama.

Why couldn't everyone have been understanding, non critical in attitude, and having their "money & muscles where their mouth was" willing to help out in real ways as we struggled financially and gave to the last drop to ensure our darlings the best possible? The attitudes and mindsets of others seemed to "double the trouble", adding what I felt was unnecessary stress.

Aagh... how was I going to get off this train of thinking? *I'm sure that era of our life was good in some way—or will seemed to have been?* Okay, well, just cook! I taste the salad. It doesn't have the magic that captures the taste buds. I've missed something. I mentally go through the ingredients and flavorings... salt (check), olive oil (check)... Oh! How could I have forgotten? The fresh squeezed lemon juice!

I smiled. The timing of the coinciding thoughts. The salad just wasn't good enough without the lemon. Perhaps that's what it was—tough times are the lemon juice to add the zing, the spunk, the "pow", to make me what I am today or need to be?

And if, when I mentally "taste" a situation I've been through, it still feels a bit too sour, and I haven't yet reached the "Ah ha" moment, when it all makes sense, perhaps it's just that all the rest of the ingredients haven't been added yet. As time passes, and more comes my way, I bet it'll all balance out and each experience will help to compliment and build on another. I'll be glad for it all in the end.

(Here's my special recipe, for those who want to try it!)

Avacado Greenut Salad

Diced avocado

Celery

Green pepper (bell pepper/capsicum)

Lettuce cut small

Cucumber diced

Sliced olives

Peanuts

Salt

Olive oil

And fresh squeezed lemon!

Enjoy!

The Taylor Test

Ever read about the famous “Hudson Taylor”? If you’ve learned about missionaries you’ve most probably heard his name. If you’d asked me before what I most remembered about him, I would have probably said: His success with reaching the people of China came in part due to his being willing to dress as they did and shave his head partly, dyeing his hair black and so forth. Just going the distance to be relatable, and look as they, as much as he possibly could. He was responsible for hundreds of missionaries being sent to China.

It was eye opening for me when I recently read a short write up and summary of his life—there was much more to it than fame and success. His life held anything but glamour, and had many heart wrenching experiences. Those he came to work with originally wouldn’t accept him and his ways of reaching China, he had to head out alone, on his own, far away, on his mission in China. He outlived his wife and two of his young children. When resentment against foreigners and missionaries were at a peak, he heard the nearly fatal blow of the news of hundreds of missionaries and their children going on to their heavenly reward. Martyred. He’ll be applauded and rewarded by the Lord for the great deeds he did, and those who found their way to Heaven as a result of giving himself to live among those so needing to hear of God’s love. But man, while in the thick of it, it was one hard-knock life.

It wasn’t just him. Many of the other well known “greats” had the same. Take some of the famous classical musicians, like Johann Sebastian Bach. He had 20 children, many of them taking after him musically. His family was so large and musical that the word for “musician” in one area of Germany was “Bach.” Famous, right? Who hasn’t heard of him nowadays! Yet in all his life time, he never owned an organ himself. Wow. He did it all using others’. His wife, and mother of his first seven children died. Talk about busy. A single father with seven children for awhile till he married again—gaining 13 more children over time! He died blind, after a stroke. No one knew much about his music till about 80 years after he was gone, when it started to get more attention.

Then there is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He composed 600 musical works in his life time. Getting a young start, when 5, 6 and 7 years old he was composing minuets and performing for Royalty. Yet five of his brothers and sisters passed away, when young. Only two of his own children survived, of the six he’d had. He was poor, and his life ended early, at age 35. He was buried in a pauper’s grave.

I guess the moral of the story is, just because there's no big fan fare made of you right now—just keep on at it. The true “greats” seldom were thought of as such, by those around them at the time.

I was whining the other day. “So, for those of us who have it good—like I consider myself to—I have a husband that works hard, gets paid, gets his well-deserved sleep at night, and a pat on the back for providing for his family. But then wife (me) works hard all day with the children, cares for them in the night, and... nope doesn't get a pay check... but costs money rather for the team of us! –What's wrong with this picture?”

Why has money now been equated with “great job!” I was wanting to prove myself as working just as hard and more so—with cash to validate my efforts. But without a salary coming into my hands after each hard week's work, I felt no acclaim or “back pats”.

Then it came to me—keeping Hudson Taylor and all the others in mind who gave their all for others, and got no monetary gain or reward at the time: You are a missionary.

That's what I am—a missionary to my own family. I teach them about the Lord, I give my heart and soul to do the best I can, in all the ways I can. I don't do it for money. Those missionaries of the past never did. It was good enough for them to wait till Heaven to get that “well done” from Jesus—who they lived their lives for anyway.

Pie 'n' Pizza cutters

I wanted to toss them the moment we got them—it was too painful to be reminded: We can't eat pie or pizza anymore! Ah, how I like them. Sniff. When moving to our new house here, from being overseas, we needed all the basics. There was a special sale on for a kitchen starter kit with the cooking and serving utensils and so forth. Most everything we can use. But included was one especially that we had no use for...at the time. The pie and pizza cutters—you know those rolling kind?—was one of those “not needed” pieces. We had just started on our “gluten-and-nearly-everything-else-free” diet, or so it seemed.

That was two years ago. But happily, with time, experience, and experimentation now behind us, Friday is pie day!—or Pizza! I use very untraditional ingredients to make the above. But tasty enough, and the kids love it, most of all. And we never serve it without using our cutters, of course. It's just fun! At last! We take them out of the drawer with reverence, and a bit of humour, “We have to have the pie cutters!” There's this kind of feeling of conquering, of overcoming, and fulfilment. The once deemed “impossible” is now at our finger tips. All it took was a bit of time and experience.

It reminded me a bit of what it's like for our youngest, who tries to copy his older brothers and attempts to make lego creations. Some days he just feels like all he can do is break what's made, or sprinkle lego on the floor. He so wants to be able to pick up those pieces and out of his hand to come a fun car or airplane. He tries putting pieces together, but is happiest when daddy or a brother help him make something that resembles more what he's thinking of. (They are far better at it than my attempts!)

I know when I look at him, that in time he too will be able to make things just as cleverly as his brothers. All it's going to take is time and experience. But he doesn't know that. He's in the “now” and all he knows is that he can't do it—and possibly never will. He's not as good as his brothers in building—that's who he is, it's a plain fact to him, and he can't seem to make that change. If only he could know the future, and how it will all work out well. I can see it, as I've had time and experience to know that... or else I wouldn't know it either.

But then I seem to think those same things myself—the way things are now, the way I am now, the problems I face now, the challenges now that seem to go on and on... maybe I should learn a lesson from the lego, or from the Pie cutters... just give things time, and let myself gain some experience. Things will be different. I'll learn. Things will and can change and improve. And I'll be able to look back later and see where I was today, and smile, "If I'd only known... I would have had more trust, more faith, more patience..." Perhaps I can try to have some anyway—knowing one day I'd chide myself, in retrospect?

Shattering Sounds

I was reading to my boys today about the "natural frequency" of objects, and how sometimes glasses have shattered if a singer sings in its same natural frequency. Or bridges have broken due to sound alone. I've often been fascinated about that—mere sound that makes things happen.

As I paused after reading, I got to thinking—what is my natural frequency, what is the essence of my being, what is my core, and what would "shake me down to the core" or "shatter me"? The things that have been the hardest for me in life have been those things that touched on what was my very essence.

What is "me", how has God made me, what things are really important to me, what do I live for, what have I embraced as important or vital in life? When something has happened that has rung at its "frequency" or "hits a nerve" as some say, it can shake me, or at times has broken me, shattered me, brought me to my knees. It's the things that are the most important to us, down to our core, that I think are the hardest to shake when we encounter them, or they are thrust on us.

Some news articles I can't bear to read. It smarts too much. It tells of wrongs that are exactly what I live to stamp out, in my small humble efforts. The face to face encounters of anything related to what I give my heart and life for, gets me very upset. How much can I take before I break, before I shatter, before I "lose it"? The Lord seems to know my "breaking point" and it says in His Word He'll not give more than I can handle. (1Corinthians 10:13) He can shield me from reaching the shattering point in all my life's challenges and adventures—though I've felt pretty close at times.

But what about those times when I feel it *has* brought me beyond the point of "holding it together"? I thought of something neat. How does Genesis say that God made the world? What was the action that He did to bring it into being? It says He used sound, sort of, as it says He spoke. "And God said...!" His sounds, however, when meeting the exact frequencies of all parts of His Creation, creates, and recreates, puts together, gathers, energizes, enlivens, heals, restores.

He knows what we are made of and knows us down to our core. He can be the positive match to our soul's frequency. He can bring all our shattered pieces and put us together again—even better than before, if we listen to Him, and let ourselves take the time to let the song of His heart resonate with ours. When we know that He knows the very heart of us, there's that wonderful, I-can-go-through-anything overwhelming faith and strength that washes in and builds us up again.

Bleedin' Tears (song) 1 July, 2011

Sometimes I just can't take it
And wonder why
I just can't shake it
I start to cry

I'm bleedin' tears
Where's the valve?
To stop the pain
And bring the salve

Tortured souls
Fears compel
Lashing out darkness
A living hell

Can a single drop
Of a heart torn tear
Sent with a prayer
Bring help down here?

Can a single glance
Of a tender smile
Soothe a hurt
At least for awhile?

I know I guy
Whose tears ran down
His bleedin' side
Now wears crown

He'll wipe your tears
Release the valve
To stop the pain
And bring the salve

He gave the plan
To salvage man
Love—for Him and you
Can it be that hard to do?

To send a smile and a prayer
Have we tried?
To lend a hand, show we care
I just can't hide...

I'm bleedin' tears
Let's turn this valve
To stop the pain
And bring the salve

My Favourite Videos to watch

When I need to chill, and get my mind off the struggles, I go out to the back yard, and lie in the grass in the warm sunshine. I examine each blade, spot the tiniest creature making its way through the large “forest” of the lawn. I look at the details that even the smallest flower has, flowers so small I wouldn’t even see them while standing up. I see that each blade and type of grass are each different. There are countless shapes and sizes, shades of green, widths and textures. I relax. The One who knows about the tiniest flower growing among the small and stepped on blades of grass surely knows about me. I take a deep breath. I can face things once again. He’ll help me to do so.

The sunset and sunrise each day are worth the watch. I may not have the time to sit and watch the full film of these daily. But I like to get a glance, and admire the beauty, the hues, the majestic display, the vibrancy, or simply welcome the moment, that light has finally come, or rest is near. I sense the “Father of Light” behind every coloured cloud and ray of sunlight. The children and I enjoy the moment together. The beauty can only be from a Divine projector. That’s one less thing I have to do—I don’t have to create the days or finish them off, and come up with a painting to display to announce it. There is so much else we can leave in His hands too. He’ll take care of the big and the little things.

When I need a comedy, I get a good front row seat and watch with joy my young sons using their creativity with mud, and working together well, playing nicely. I just watch, and smile, and laugh a bit. It’s amazing the things that can be imagined, done for fun with just a pile of dirt, and a bit of water added. The last show was about 45 minutes long, of a farm taking place, and crops being tended to, rice paddies flooded, and the ground ploughed for planting—all while they chose to remain seated, fully absorbed in a muddy spot about a meter square. I didn’t sit close for the whole show, as I viewed much from the kitchen window while working, but the part I did see up close was fun and therapeutic. It reminds me of someone else who thought the dust of the Earth was a cool thing to make things with. And because of it, people are now on Earth.

Magical Medicine

I think one of the best healing factors, for those things that are hard to go through, and seem pretty senseless and pointless at the time, is when because of that experience under my belt, I am able help someone else. I can relate, understand, empathise and pull them through. I’ve been there. At the time it may have been real hard. And there may have been years of wondering what the point was, why I went through that pain—until the time I found that beautiful feeling of healing while helping another in their similar time of pain.

It’s wonderful to reach that point in time where it all falls into place, where it changes from a bothersome event, to the perfect medicine to heal another’s wounds. You feel the healing to your own heart at the same time. The rough and heavy rock that’s been a weight in your heart seems to magically change into a jewel. It not only helps you find closure for a difficult event in the past, but makes you actually grateful that you had such a happening to draw from. That brings such a wonderful healing. Without it you wouldn’t have been much of a help at that crucial time to help someone through.

Here is a simple example that expresses what I’m trying to say.

Today I heard a loud cry-turned-scream coming from the living room, from my oldest. Somehow our son had leapt and then hurt the front of his leg, his shin. He hadn’t felt that much pain in a while. A large bruise and scrape was seen right away. It looked like it really hurt. I winced. He just wanted to lie down, hold his leg, cry and be comforted until the pain stopped.

Things finally calmed down, and he found courage when I could tell him my own accident of that nature, when just about the same age as he is now. Though three decades ago, it had been so painful for me at the time, I still remember it. I described how it happened and reassured him that I knew nearly exactly what it felt like.

It was at that point of communication that he calmed down, dealt with it, and braved on. In a short while bit he was up again, though hobbling on his one fine leg, trying to get in the car for our park trip. He'd felt he'd have to miss it, crying to stay home, as he was unable to walk comfortably. But our talk changed him. He wasn't alone in his hurt, feeling we were clueless. He didn't need to continue to prove and express his hurt, through drama and demands for feel-better treats.

He knew I knew, and could "feel his pain". He gained hope that, just maybe by the time we got to the park, he'd feel better. When we arrived 20 minutes later, he exclaimed happily that he indeed was just fine.

What was just a moment of seemingly, pointless pain for me at the time of my own small-but-memorable accident, now I mentally checked off as a "good and essential, wouldn't have wished it happened differently" event. What happened in the past was perfect for what we needed to get us through one of the day's events.