
COPING, WITH LITTLE FAITH

MAY 17, 2020

So, what has changed for you? Are you accepting of your new normal or are you ready for a return to your pre-Covid routine? Wednesday was difficult for me, even overnight was difficult, I didn't sleep so well. On Thursday morning, I needed to go, where, I didn't know. I got dressed, made coffee in my Clemson mug, and cranked up the car at 7:00am. I just needed to drive. With no plans, I found myself driving towards my office and listening to Erica Campbell's Get Up Morning Show. There was praise music and Griff's prayer, it was great! I had no idea how much I missed that routine and those morning laughs. I was back at home by 7:30am and I felt much better. My family wouldn't have even known that I left, except that I came back with McDonald's breakfast for them.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³¹If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

How are you coping with your new normal? I believe God has some changes in store for all of His people. The question is - are we allowing Him to have His way or are we stuck in our former state of mind and unwilling to change due to our *little faith*?

I wrote some time ago about thinking vs. feeling and how I relied much heavier on thinking than feeling. Well, the evidence shows that a major shift is occurring within me.

My younger son began asking if we could get a dog about two years ago. He asked again in March when the schools closed and the death toll began to spike. I said yes. My thinking was...this was a stressful time, unprecedented, so many unknowns. I thought his desire

demonstrated a healthy mental status. He knew he was experiencing stress and he thought a pet would help. Sure. Not only did I say yes to the dog, I began looking for a dog. I thought we should get a mixed-breed because it pained me to see the list of health problems common in purebreds on the AKC website. After thinking about it, I wanted a short-hair, mixed-breed, male puppy that would grow to be about 40lbs.

On April 25th, Nick announced that he had found the perfect puppy. The Humane Society was social-distancing so we called and set an appointment, and they brought the dog outside to us. He was a cute little puppy, but he seemed sickly, as he lacked the energy and enthusiasm I would expect from a puppy. I asked the employee if there was another male in the litter that we could see. When she brought out the first puppy's brother, he came to life! No longer would he sit in my son's lap, he wanted to play with his brother! They tousled and tumbled, nipped each other on the ears! It was pure joy to watch them. Suddenly, an insane inclination tugged at my heart. I totally ignored the social-distancing rules and stepped close to the employee and whispered, "Am I crazy? Why would I consider adopting both of them?" Her response was, "I don't know! I can't give you any discounts, the same fees apply for both of them."

I wasn't thinking about the fees. I was feeling their love and their bond and considering how they would keep each other company once our work and school schedules resumed. I was so moved by their loving play - they were inseparable, I felt like they needed each other. That lady should have whacked me on the head! She was right, there was no discount with two dogs! I would pay twice the adoption fees, twice the vet bills, twice the dog food, there would be twice the holes dug in our backyard, and twice the poop to pick up. I thought about none of those things. We have two dogs! After much contemplation, we named them Forrest and Bubba - friends for life!

It's been 3 weeks, and I am still in love with our two new additions to the family! They love their new home, they love each other, and they love their humans! We have taught them to sit on command, they will even stay for an extra second or two! They are learning to walk on a leash without stopping to smell every dandelion along the sidewalk - but that's been a harder lesson to teach! While I confess my lack of thinking this decision through, having them has proven to be twice the walks, twice the hugs, twice the rubs, twice the tickles, twice the laughs, and twice the love!

I ask you, how are you allowing God to have His way in your life? I am not saying that it was God's plan for us to adopt two dogs - it may have been, but my point of emphasis is that I put my thinking, rationalizing, financially analytical mind aside and allowed my heart to make a decision - that was God. My children are still in disbelief, because that's not the mama they know! My point is that if we can stop worrying about how things were, and look with faithful anticipation towards the future God has planned for us, the better off we will be. Yes, I got in my car and drove to work this week, but the blessing was in listening to the Christian voices I am accustomed to and laughing with them first thing in the morning.

What are you allowing yourself to do that is out of the ordinary? How are your children coping? What are you doing for them? How are you letting your guard down? We have a tendency to hold fast to our normal routines, our normal ways of life. This virus, the closures, the stay at home orders - our lives have changed. We must be willing to let God have His way in our lives. His eye is on the sparrow, so we should know He watches over us, too. A few suggestions to help you cope and allow God to speak to your heart.

- Open your blinds each day. Don't sit in darkness, allow the light to penetrate your home!
- Talk to your children. What's on their mind?
- Take walks outdoors in the fresh air and sunlight. Ride your bike!
- Do something to make someone else's life better. Cook for an elderly neighbor, pick up groceries for them, give blood, contact a local shelter to ask what needs they have.
- Write down your thoughts. Start a journal. Send a letter to a friend. Send notes to the children in your life - they love mail!
- Go for a drive. Gas is the cheapest it's been in years!
- Change rooms for your Zoom meetings - there is no rule that you have to sit in one place for meeting after meeting.
- Rearrange a bedroom or living space. Paint a room!
- Reduce your screen time, to the extent that you can, outside of mandatory Zoom meetings, etc. Be present in your life. Netflix and YouTube are great, but take the time to become aware of your own life.
- Cook some new recipes.
- Go to a different grocery store than your usual. It will be a different experience!
- Allow yourself to be creative. Paint, draw, make a new wreath for your front door!
- Change your hairstyle. Change your hair color, yourself!
- Plant some seeds, water them and watch them grow.
- Go for a picnic. Cook outside on your grill.
- Write down your chapter of Proverbs as a poster. (Your chapter is your day of the month on which you were born.)

Wow! I knew since Wednesday that I wanted to write about coping, but this was not the post I was thinking I would write. I hope it meant something to you! Amen!

Have a wonderful week!
Stay safe and sanitized!
Kim

