

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

April 2009

“The Greatest Investment”

When we hear the word investment we will probably think of money - some of us may have short or long-term investments. The word to invest literally means to clothe, to surround, to adorn or to grace, to confer or to give. Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary of the English Language says of investment “...to clothe money in something permanent or less fleeting, stocks, lands or goods”. A long-term investment is one in which you invest something – and although you expect a return – it may not come until much later.

God Himself made the greatest long-term investment there ever was or will be. He planted (invested) the best He had – His Son Jesus – who came to this earth (leaving Heaven and all it’s Glory, and the precious and intimate love of His Father) to provide a way for us . In Galatians 3:16 Jesus Christ is referred to as the “Seed”. Jesus knew why He came to this earth – to suffer, and to die, to experience resurrection, and to pay the full and complete price for us – and all who would believe on Him – that we might be reconciled to God.

Jesus said “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in the world will keep it for eternal life”. (John 12:24, 25 NIV). The same Scripture in the Living Bible says “I must fall and die like a kernel of wheat that falls into the furrows of the earth. Unless I die I will be alone – a single seed. But my death will produce many new wheat kernels – a plentiful harvest of new lives. If you love your life down here – you will lose it. If you despise your life down here – you will exchange it for eternal glory”. When Jesus said that if we hate and despise our lives in this world He was simply calling us to a higher life in this world – a life of purpose, direction, and service – a life that will be blessed by Him down here with eternal rewards. The world is “me first” – my life, my wants, my things, my needs – in a word – selfishness. Our life in Christ is not about us – there must be something bigger and better and far more important than us. There is – His will – His way – His purpose for our lives. In this we will find fulfillment and joy beyond anything we could imagine. A life lived for the Lord is a blessed life. Jesus was a seed planted on the earth and in the earth by the express will of His Father. We also are called to die - to our own will and ways in this world that Jesus might be manifested in and through us to a dying world.

Jesus said “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24 NIV). “If any of you want to be my followers, you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross and follow me closely” (Mark 8:34 LB). “Anyone who wants to follow me must put aside his own desires and conveniences and carry his cross with him every day and keep close to me” (Luke 9:23 LB) ! Jesus made a choice – to live in obedience to His Father. We can and must do the same.

Patsy Clairmont said “Built into a woman’s cells is a longing to invest herself lovingly and wisely into other’s lives”(I love Being a Woman). As the Father planted (invested) Jesus – so we can plant (invest) ourselves in kingdom work, by first giving ourselves daily to Him. What are our investments? First of all – time. We are all given the same amount of time, and we all spend time. We can invest time or waste it. Since God’s heart and priority is and always will be, people it is ours also. We all have gifts, talents and abilities that God has given us to reach and touch others. We all have resources that can be used for kingdom purposes – money and substance that can be shared with others in need (the Biblical pattern is always one of giving). Prayer is a gift given to us and a strong, fruitful part of our life in Christ.

Besides all that God has given us outwardly, He has done wondrously within each one of us. What is in you inwardly that can be planted in others? The love of God (in it's many facets) is already in you (Romans 5:5 and 1 Corinthians 13). The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) is your Character. These are yours by choice and decision – and the more you develop and use them the more you will grow in the Lord.

According to Acts 10:38 Jesus went about “doing good”. Jesus life was not just words as He moved among the people, but a demonstration of the love of God behind the words. People were drawn to Him by the love He manifested and walked out day by day. In our early days of education we did “show and tell.” These are the days to show the world and each other the love of God. You can plant seeds of love in the lives of people – even complete strangers as well as those close and familiar to you. Everyone (those who know Him and those who don't know Him yet) are struggling or fighting a battle. All need seeds planted in their lives – of kindness and goodness, of mercy and forgiveness, of hope, of substance and supply, of caring, and of love and concern in a heartless and cruel world, we who have so much should be passing on Jesus to others in His goodness. If God loves – we love. If God cares – we care. If God listens – we listen. If God meets needs (and He does!) as we are able we can meet needs. Love is powerful, caring is powerful. We can “clothe” and “surround “ people with the love of God – letting the Jesus in us out to others that He may reveal Himself and draw them to Himself. It is no small thing to plant seeds into the lives of others. Mother Theresa said “We can do no great things – only small things with great love”. Joyce Meyers said “love is how we treat people”. We can listen, we can care, we can be compassionate, we can treat all people with respect, we can be open, warm, and friendly, we can encourage and strengthen others – we can add value to people's lives. “Little children let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions (1 John 3:18 LB).

Remember that a seed is usually tiny, and can't be seen once it is planted. Whatever seeds we plant in others – God causes them to grow. Water your seed by using your faith and your prayers to believe that God will cause the seed to grow, and spring up unto salvation and eternal life.

Investment of any kind is a risk – a risk that requires faith. If you don't invest the best that you have, and sometimes the last of what you have there is no opportunity or potential for an increase or a harvest. Think of the ongoing harvest and return to the Father because of one “Seed” planted. It was and is a long-term investment with great reward.

Hebrews 6:10, 11 LB says “For God is not unfair. How can He forget your hard work for Him, or forget the way you used to show your love for Him – and still do – by helping his children? And we are anxious that you keep right on loving others as long as life lasts, so that you will get you full reward.” This Scripture speaks of our love for one another within the Body of Christ. It does not stop there! To those who don't know Him yet but are created in His Image - we have the privilege (and the responsibility) to present and reveal the God who is love; who in that love sent Jesus to do what none of us could do for ourselves – Jesus who loved us gave himself up for us – that we might have and experience LIFE, and that abundant and eternal. To Him alone be Glory and Praise!

In Christ
Toni Quinn
For His Glory Women's Ministry

“Anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life.
But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever,
real and eternal.”

The Message John 12:24, 25

“My success on any given day is measured by the seeds I have
sown – not the harvest I have reaped.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson