

Where There is Smoke... There's Fire!



I have not written a short story in months. The time has arrived. So many things have transpired in a matter of months. I decided that the word “procrastination” would not be in my vocabulary this year, so I am taking on some goals that should have been sought after AND accomplished years ago. I reached for my goals, but my mind-set never caught up with my heart. I knew what I wanted to do, but I always gave up trying.

One of my long-time goals is to do something that I should have done a long time ago and that was to further my education! In doing so, I have found that my life is overly crowded with being available to everyone else and not able to fulfill my own personal needs. I barely have time to do anything except work, go to school, go to church and cater to everybody else. In other words, I have the "Satisfy Everybody Else and Forsake Myself Syndrome." One of my biggest problems is dealing with difficult people and in an effort to carry out being considerate and kind to others, I sometimes appear to be a doormat. There is one particular incident that I want to share with you. This is straight from the heart, so there are no formalities.

As many of you know, I am an avid “church girl.” I have been in the church since I was a baby and when I say, I have been in church all of my life -- I mean just that. I have gone from one extreme to the next. I am a church musician, so I have never had a choice, but to go to church even when I did not want to. I have always allowed church folks to dictate to me what I should and should not do. As a child, that was okay, but as a grown-up, it is not too smart. I have learned that people quickly and fluently take advantage of people who do not speak up for themselves or stand up for what they believe is right. I have always been in the breed that tries to please everybody. My mom is delicate and sweet. She would not hurt a fly. It seems that we get closer every day. As she grows older, she continues to cease every moment to mentor and help me learn from my mistakes. My dad has a good heart, but he is the type of person who will tell you where to get off if you come at him the wrong way. I have that part of my dad in me, but the part of my mother that is delicate and sweet over shadows the toughness that I inherited from my dad. Sometimes people tend to take advantage of that.

I mentioned church earlier because a lot of my hurt and pain is derived from church folks. I could write hundreds of stories about church folks and what goes on in the minds of church folks because I believe I have experienced it all. Most recently, I had an incident to happen where a relatively new church member who is or was a member of one of the choirs that I play for took something that I said to her and ran with it. It was basically constructive criticism and my attempt to have authority and exude some kind of order in the choir. Granted, the conversation

appeared to go well, minutes later a demon the size of an elephant stepped out and took over this woman's mind. Though I was as gentle as anyone could possibly be, this woman deliberately set out to scandalize my name and make me look like a big bad wolf. The sad part is that some of the long time church members who know me very well and know my character have suggested that I must have done something terribly wrong since this woman has raised such an issue over my authoritative suggestion to her. Wrong answer!

I have been so hurt by some of the reactions of people who know that I would NEVER approach anyone in the wrong way. I have gotten the cold shoulder and "goo goo eyes" as my pastor would say. Even my pastor appears to be a little insensitive to what really happened. I wonder if he even knows both sides. I never bothered to tell him.

The lesson and the moral to this story is where there is smoke, there is fire. There were many times when I could look at this woman and see trouble. I could feel the unstable spirit that dwelled within her whenever we talked, but I never called her on it. In other words, sometimes you have to call a spade a spade. Had I not been a doormat with her to begin with, she would not have indulged herself in committing to bringing me down with her negativity. Because I am such a pushover, she found liberty in smearing my name. Of course, this incident also let me see that we cannot always satisfy everybody and even though I am committed to my church responsibilities, I am only one person. If I need to let some things go in order to accomplish my goals, God won't be mad with me. Instead, He let me see that no matter how much I stretch myself to the limit, I cannot satisfy everybody.

I have one word for people like "Delilah." I chose to use that name because the Biblical character, Delilah, had a manipulative spirit and that is what this church member and so-called woman of holiness reminds me of. The word I have for her is this - "danger." It is dangerous to tamper with God's anointed. It is also dangerous for outsiders to buy into the garbage and trash that the Delilahs put out there – especially, when the facts do not add up.

I guess you are wondering how would I know that I am anointed by God. Well, God has shown me many things and at my age, I have been through things that people much older than I am have not begun to experience. I can see things quickly and clearly before they even transpire. Sometimes it is a bit scary, but I know that it is a gift that has been passed down many generations. When you are anointed and appointed, you just know it - plain and simple.

A word of advice - when someone lies on you and tries to tear you down just step back and let God handle it. Even though you may become angry to the point of no return, God can handle it. Not only that, but God has a way of pointing us in the right direction. Sometimes we need a little nudge. That nudge can be pleasant or it can be a little hard to swallow. Most of my nudges are very hard to swallow, but what I do is get a little water and the nudge goes down a little easier. In this case, the nudge is my present situation and the water is the Word. The Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword. It will either make you or break you. It will draw you or push you. Sometimes it feels like it is so hard to get into the Word of God and just actually start reading, but once you make that choice to do so, it pulls you deeper because you want more. If you want more of the Word today, just know that the smoke-screen will soon clear up and the fire can be put out, but in order to tame the smoke and refrain from getting

burned by the fire, you must make it to the water in the well. The well is Jesus Christ and He has vitamin water, sparkling water, fountain water, and holy water. His water can put out any fire!

Now, I know that it is okay to strive to reach my goals and to keep striving until I do! I know that it is okay if I do not satisfy everybody because only what I do for Christ will last. I am so glad that I can walk through the smoke screen knowing that if there is a fire, Jesus is my river of living water!

To God Be The Glory!

Until next time...
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