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Quotes for the Quarter

The resurrection gives my life meaning and direction and the opportunity to start over no matter what my circumstances.

~Robert Flatt

And he departed from our sight that we might return to our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and behold, He is here.

~St Augustine

Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there.

~Clarence W. Hall



Keep Yourselves in the Love of God

By Jaque Shank

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Jude 1:21 (KJV)

I love this verse. When I hear it, the words "keep yourselves" stand out. It certainly implies that it is given to me to direct my attention to God's love every day, all the time, until at last it is easy to remain in the consciousness of His love for me. It's easy for me to hear this today, because I hear the verse in the *love* of God.

It wasn't always this way. When I was a new Christian and told I needed to read my Bible, it was hard for me, be-

cause every time I opened it I felt like I was being presented with a Past-Due-Bill for which I had no resources to pay. So when I read "keep yourselves in the love of God" I'd think, "okay "I" am supposed to do this. It's up to *me* to keep myself in God's love." Then when I didn't *feel* loved, I'd think. "I'm failing again. I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do, and no matter how hard I try, *I cannot pay this bill!!!*"

Thank goodness the Bible itself offered

the relief I needed from the *familiar* voice leading me. (This was *before* I knew I was following the voice of a stranger. See John 10:3-5). The verse then that ministered God's love to me most often was: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.* Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

When I first came to the Lord I was full of self hatred; I did-



Celebration

By Sara McDaniel

The whole world is robust with God's eternal, embracing love. God is at work on an inconceivably vast scale, embracing all of crea-

tion, all of history. Hard as it is for minds flattened by secularism to imagine, this is the resurrection world in which the followers of Jesus

live. Resurrection is the biggest thing about Jesus. It is also the biggest thing about us. His Spirit raises us from a dead life.



God Makes Missionaries!

By: Michael and Fawn Stephens

Our lives have been changed! We've been waiting

since we got home from Haiti to see if our "spiritual high" would fade, and the longing for Haiti would subside. We thought, perhaps God has blessed us with a one-time experience of mission work, of actually getting to reach out and touch orphans and widows, and give them food, love, and the Word, and that's that. Perhaps He doesn't intend for us to go back...

Or, perhaps not. Our "high" has not subsided one bit. Our longing has only grown; somewhat due to the fact that our children all are still talking about wanting to go, even talking about living there (without *too* much initiation on our part). Also due to the fact that we are still involved with some people there, on the phone and email with them. There are still children who need advocates, adults who lean on those who seem to "have it all", and other missionaries who need support from those of the same culture. There are also some there who still call and ask Michael when he will come back and run things again. We also are still working with some young men who love the Lord and seek to

work hard to make an honest, decent living, but need some resources to get started.

But, absolutely without a doubt, the single biggest reason we are still in love with Haiti, and are praying that the Lord will give us peace and contentedness until He allows us to go back is because *He's* planted this seed in our hearts, and is watering it each day - His way and in His time. We are no longer afraid that God will not bless us in what He has given us to do. We ask boldly for Him to make the way, because we *know* He is good, and we *know know* that He loves us. We are asking Him to go back to Haiti - at some point.

In the meantime, we ask for your prayers that we are always seeking what the Lord has for us, not for what our flesh would want (to go *now*). There is much more to be done before we could go and we choose to wait on the Lord, not the event. It's hard to *always* keep that focus, and your intercession there for us will be so appreciated!

One specific prayer request/plea for support that we have concerns a 21 year old young man that we came to know in the orphanage hospital. His younger sister was there for a broken femur, and he and another brother are all the family there is left. The

night before we left, he approached Michael and I and asked if we could help him buy some tools, so he can work. He is a certified refrigeration technician. He graduated from school in 2007. He is extremely smart and hardworking, and no doubt would make a great repairman with his own tools.

He provided me with a copy of an estimate he got in Jun 2008 from a tool supplier for the tools he would need, along with a copy of his diploma. The total amount to buy the tools in US dollars is about \$2800. We are asking that any of you who are willing and able to help this young man to please ask the Lord if it is something He would have you do. We have no idea if the Lord will provide all of the money or not, but we are putting it before Him and asking boldly! We will collect any support we receive and then send it via Western Union. While donating to the Red Cross is definitely wonderful and needed, this is a great way in a devastated country to really help someone specific with a known need.

Thank-you! We love you!

Loving God and Loving Others,
—*Michael and Fawn*

Keep Yourselves in the Love of God, cont

n't know then that this was the reason behind my unhappiness, but God is so good, He wanted to relieve me of *myself*, so He called me to His word and I dug in. On the journey I learned the definition of bondage: **"The inability to start when you want to start or stop when you want to stop."** Excessive, without boundaries, and without moderation; there was "I". I over ate, I over spent, and I either spoke too much too often, or I didn't speak when I should.

Self hatred is the perfect poison for any relationship; someone has to take the blame! When you can't stand yourself or see yourself objectively because it hurts too much to look, someone else has to be the scapegoat!

When I answered God's call and sought Him, naturally, trying to read and journalize every day fell right into my old bondage pattern. I felt condemned when I did the work because it wasn't good enough, *and I*

felt condemned when I didn't do the work because I believed I was slated for failure anyway, so what was the use? But I left it up to Him to set me free even while I still spun in circles of despair. I didn't see *how* He could do it, since I was, after all, His "hardest" case, but I trusted Him to do it anyway. He did, and He still does.

I was speaking with a friend today about doing the right things when we don't feel like they're working—even reading and journalizing God's word. At the conclusion of an assignment I may not feel any freer, but I keep doing it anyway because I am determined to seek God and find Him, (because *He* said I should and would). I talked about Nehemiah and how he asked God for assistance but kept building the wall while waiting for that assistance to come. My friend said, "Even God can't steer a parked car!" And then she talked about what she teaches her College stu-

dents. "Ready, *fire*, aim!" Instead of "Ready, *aim, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim.*" What a picture! I laughed at how often I tried to get it right or be perfect, straining to the point that I never fired. So afraid of missing the target, I would just keep *aiming, aiming, aiming*. Today I fire and trust God to guide my arrows to their targets—a good visual for me of spontaneous freedom. Yes, today I hit more targets by actually firing arrows.

My faith is real only because my God is real. God's love is tangible, alive and manifested in my life, so keeping myself in the love of God? I know who is *really* doing it ;) *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Gal 2:20 (NKJV)*

—J aque



Withworkers

We have a vision fueled with His faithfulness to supply hope and a future. We delight in *working with our Withworkers* to eliminate the ache in those who are unable to discern God's speaking voice within them.

Contributions and monthly support is the furtherance of our vision. Your financial support finds its root in Christ. By giving it away you have planted a seed, producing a crop that generates an outpouring of kindness and generosity.

Please consider helping us as we help others experience the joy of entering honest dialogue with God through a strategy for daily abiding. Partner with us on a monthly basis by visiting our website and signing up as a "Withworker."

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Celebration, cont.

(From notes in Renovare Spiritual Formation Bible)

Celebration is actually a discipline, something we can *choose* to do. It is defined as: Utter delight and joy in ourselves, our life, our world as a result of our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty and goodness.

Father said to me:

Sara, are you confident of my goodness, beauty and greatness?

Yes Father, I am.

This is what brings you joy, this is your source of true joy and because I will never leave you, you can celebrate, embracing even suffering and still walk in the light of joy. Revel in Me!

Sara, celebration is saying Amen to me. It is giving me your allegiance and your obedience. You are showing your love for me and your agreement with me. You show your trust and confidence in me. You show that you know my heart and that I am working all things out for good. I am full of joy

and I want you to be full of joy also. Yes, there will be circumstances that are hard but this doesn't affect our relationship.

Celebration returns our focus to God and is a natural outgrowth of spending time with God. When we take daily time to pause and focus on God, it makes our deprivations and sorrows seem small because His goodness becomes so real to us.

Paul says:

[Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean revel in Him!](#)

[Philippians 4:4 The Message](#)

And Paul was celebrating even amongst circumstances that most of us hope never to face:

[And I'm going to keep that celebration going because I know how it's going to turn out. Through your faithful prayers and the generous response of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, everything he wants to do in and through me will be done. I can hardly wait to continue on my course. I don't expect](#)

[to be embarrassed in the least. On the contrary, everything happening to me in this jail only serves to make Christ more accurately known, regardless of whether I live or die. They didn't shut me up; they gave me a pulpit! Alive, I'm Christ's messenger; dead, I'm his bounty. Life versus even more life! I can't lose.](#)

[Philippians 1:21 The Message](#)

How amazing is that? We can't lose either! Let's celebrate! Let's not be flattened by secularism, we want our souls to be in 3D, able to bounce back and dance and celebrate in God's presence no matter what. We want to be resurrection-defined.

[But you'll welcome us with open arms when we run for cover to you. Let the party last all night! Stand guard over our celebration. You are famous, God, for welcoming God-seekers, for decking us out in delight.](#)

[Psalm 5:11-12 The Message](#)

—Sara



Applause For the DARC

Discipline, Accountability, Relationship and Community bring life to VI's structure. Without them we'd have a good tool but no motivation for its daily use. We'd *intend* to

love God but have no follow-through on the good intentions. Lack of follow-through makes us an easy target for condemnation.

Condemnation doesn't stem from our *inability* as much as from the refusal to

act on the conviction of our *capability*. As new creatures we begin to see the grace that lifts us above the law of sin and death. Practicing what we see to be true of ourselves is a safeguard against condemnation.

Applause for the DARC, continued

Condemnation spotlights *what we do* but conviction spotlights *who we are*. If we identify with the old man *what we do* will condemn us. If we identify with the new creation *who we are* will convict us. One beats us down, the other lifts us up. One impedes development, the other empowers it.

Conviction won't let us continually live below our true nature without feeling condemnation. The D.A.R.C. is designed by God to pull us *through* the condemnation to the higher call of conviction.

The D.A.R.C. calls us to our personal best. It draws the life of Christ to the sur-

face. It is a series of safety measures, if one fails, the next is there to catch us. Through the D.A.R.C. we have a systematic means of receiving the grace we need to enjoy our true nature...and being our true self is the wellspring of wisdom and joy in our daily walk.



Consider an Online Class...

Time for Him

Taking an online class with Visionwriters has the potential to revolutionize your interaction with the Lord. It may require more time than other studies, but developing your ear to hear the Holy Spirit and positioning yourself to receive daily, written dialogue with Him is a time investment that will yield the greatest return.

Coursework includes: daily journals, reading one chapter per week, and weekly "heartwork" (end of week overview questions) that are submitted to a Visionkeeper (online class facilitator) and coach (personal encourager).

Each day you are likely to spend 30-60 minutes journalizing, and more on days when He's really got your innermost ear. Reading the weekly chapter and completing the end of week heartwork may require an additional hour or more at the end of your week. These estimates are given as basic guidelines to offer a realistic overview of time factors.

That being said, please know that as you offer a given amount of time each day, the Lord will use that consistency to turn a little into much. He will capture your heart. As the Author and Finisher of your faith He will have no problem turning you into a true student and seeker of His face. After a while you will easily navigate the mastery of your time by learning to live from His rest. God is after your heart and will not settle for less.

Time for Others

In addition to the time allotted for your discourse with the Lord and weekly study, you will also want to participate in the private, online forum where the other members of your class are discussing journals and insights. In time, your heart will be delighted to find every opportunity for logging in, gleaning from others, and sharing your own insights with the other students. The need for people is a God ordained characteristic and healthy connections become quite contagious! Community is where the corporate ache is filled. It is where you will begin to deeply experience your self-giving nature and where the whole is defined by the sum of its parts.

[SIGN UP FOR AN ONLINE CLASS AND BEGIN TO WRITE THE VISION OF CHRIST IN YOU!](#)

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About Us

Visionwriters is a mentoring program with a long-term vision or worldview; one that is committed to a long-term Gospel. Vision either determines victory, or its absence produces despair. God's word imparts vision. Writing the vision helps us sort things out, for thoughts are untangled at the point of a pen. But writing isn't enough if it falls short of application. We help people apply the truth, because truth without application is just information. When truth is applied it is powerful.

We facilitate people who ache to hear the voice of Truth and experience a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ ~ people who want to hear God's voice and open their communication with God ~ those who want answers to their most perplexing questions ~ people ready to admit there is a hole inside and who want to overcome this inner loneliness.

Journalizing, or Visionwriting, is taking dictation from the Holy Spirit. Because we want to understand God's personal instructions, we write to capture, assimilate and obey them. You will learn how to hear God's voice, have communication with God through a spiritual relation with Him. Through that spiritual relationship you will overcome loneliness.

Philosophy of the D.A.R.C.

D = Discipline

God's discipline, sated with love, is our wake up call to righteousness. A renewed mind can't grasp the revelation of righteousness alone; this revelation requires the heart to be awakened by the voice of His love.

"Today if you will hear My voice..." (Hebrews 3:7-8). To hear with disciplined intent is to not only agree that God initiated a covenant with us, but to finally agree to fully and personally receive it. A long persistence in the right direction is required if we are going to 'see' the place to which God calls us to abide. We write the vision out of our deep longing to "understand" and then "do" what we see our Father doing.

A = Accountability

Each one of us is accountable for our own personal relationship with God as we bear it in front of others. Because we genuinely want to read so we can run with the vision, we surrender to the Holy Spirit and He leads us to what helps us sort out our thoughts and let go of what isn't true; then we can integrate what is true into our hearts and lives. Here we begin to learn the freedom of open and honest relationships.

R = Relationship

Our relationship with God is central to everything and everyone. It is intimate, up close, and personal.

Therefore we are ready to explore ourselves the way God knows us and to drop human judgment in order to receive others and encourage them toward the recognition of all God knows them to be. We are "response-able" as we proclaim the truth—here as "selves for others."

C = Community

We need one another; God made us that way. So community is the place all things finally make sense—where God's promises are realized—where the corporate ache is filled. As we operate in union with Him we lose ourselves and get nothing less than our true selves back. This is when we begin to deeply experience our self-giving nature and where "the whole is defined by the sum of its parts."