

FOR THE LOVE OF A COOKIE

I want to share a testimony with you that I hope will bring encouragement. The longer I listen to people and walk with people, the more I am convinced that most of us struggle with the same old things. The enemy of our souls still uses the arrows on us today that he used on folks years ago. You know, the arrows of fear, discouragement, inadequacies, and lack...among others. The packaging that those arrows are wrapped in may look different as they come at us as individuals, but as Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." No matter what those arrows are, he wants us to keep silent about what we are feeling and keep us thinking that we are the only ones that have ever struggled in a particular area. We know that he is the father of lies and the truth is not in him but unfortunately we sometimes find ourselves caught in his snares. As believers walking together, being transparent and releasing our testimonies is so important because it breaks the silence. It destroys lies and makes us aware that we are not the only one struggling. It brings hope of the victory that is at hand. Our breakthrough can and will result in breakthroughs for others when the testimony is released.

Some time ago I was in a funk...a very unsettled place in my heart. For those of you who don't know me, let me give you a little background. I love the home and family. I love to cook, clean (yes, I'm kind of weird that way!), sew and have big family dinners. I love the holidays and love to decorate for them. I don't particularly enjoy travelling and am perfectly content to be at home playing with grandchildren, relaxing with my husband...just being Suzie Homemaker. As a little girl, I dreamed of being a wife and a mommy taking care of my family day in and day out. That's what I wanted to be when I grew up. Seems simple enough, right? Now, let me tell you about the other areas of my life. I work outside the home in an administrative office setting. I love my job even though my heart is still at home. In my church, I walk with some of the most powerful Kingdom leaders imaginable. This is where the funk came in.

As I said, the desire of my heart is the family...not just mine, but the home and family in general. I had always been at peace with how the Father created me, even in the midst of the era of the feminist movement, etc. However, as I watched the other ladies in leadership with me, I fell into that ugly trap of comparing myself to them. Believe me when I tell you that they are MIGHTY in carrying out the Kingdom mandate and in my estimation, I never measured up to them. I felt myself gradually pulling away from them and feeling much intimidation and inadequacy when we would be together. They were always kind and supportive. It was nothing that they did...it was what was going on inside of me that was the problem. So many times I wanted to call my pastor and talk to her about what was going on, but I would listen to the lie that said, "Do you really want her to see how weak and ineffective you are? Keep your mouth shut and pretend that you are ok with yourself!" I must confess that I listened to that voice for quite some time.

I was visiting with her on the phone one day and I'm not really sure how the subject came about but Holy Spirit was faithful, as He always is, to expose what was going on inside me. I even surprised myself when out of my mouth came, "This leader has all these amazing dreams and visions. This one can win a fence post to Jesus. That one is starting her own business and is writing a movie. You battle rulers, powers and principalities in the heavenlies...and I BAKE COOKIES!!!!" There! It was out in the open. I have to laugh at myself as I write this because it sounds so silly, but you need to understand that there were tears streaming down my face as I said these words to her. I was hurting inside and had been for so long. She encouraged me in that we carry the Kingdom with us as we go if we are born again. It is "Christ in us, the hope of glory." She reminded me that God had in fact ordained the home and family and He created me this way; and by doing what He created me to do, I was advancing the Kingdom. She spoke of her earlier years and how she would make disciples while quilting with other ladies and that just because she doesn't do that anymore, didn't mean it was unimportant. When we hung up, I went to the Lord and repented for my comparisons and began to stand once again on who I am in Christ.

Several weeks had passed and I was sewing one Saturday afternoon. All at once I heard the Lord speak to me very clearly and urgently to stop what I was doing and bake a batch of chocolate chip cookies. I almost disregarded the assignment because it seemed too simple to be from Holy Spirit. (Bad theology on my part!!) However, I do know His voice and knew it was Him speaking to me so I immediately started baking. As I was getting the last cookie sheet out of the oven He instructed me to take the cookies to church the next day and have them put in the sack suppers that our church's homeless ministry team takes out every week. I obeyed.

A few days later I got a phone call from Brandy. She said she just wanted to share something that had happened as they delivered the sack suppers. Apparently, they had delivered all of the sacks but two or three and she was praying that the Lord would bring to her someone who really needed those sacks. In a few minutes she saw a woman and a little girl walking down the street and knew they were the ones. She stopped and asked if they could use the suppers. The woman, the grandmother to the little girl, was very grateful for the food. She said that they were out of food at home and she didn't know how she was going to feed her grandchildren that night. (There was a young boy at home, I believe.) Brandy gave them the sack suppers and the little girl opened her sack and began to dance with joy!! She saw those chocolate chip cookies and they were like a treasure to her. She ate one on the spot and saved the other for later and wanted to make sure there was one for her brother, as well. It delighted the grandmother to see her little one so excited and it gave Brandy a great opportunity to tell of the love Jesus had for them to even bring them chocolate chip cookies for dessert.

This was a two-fold blessing for me. You see, the Father reminded me that what I love to do...what He created me to love to do...is valuable in the Kingdom. He had that little girl in His mind when He told me to make those cookies. He wanted to

bless that family and remove a burden from the grandmother's shoulders. The sandwiches would have fed the children and removed the hunger. The cookies were just a sign of the love that He lavishes on us. It occurred to me that I never left my house. I never met the little girl or the grandmother. I never spoke to them about the love of Jesus. All I did was BAKE COOKIES!! It's funny how He will take our very words and use them to teach us love lessons!

Please understand that I am not limited to just baking cookies. I can lay hands on the sick and they will recover. I can cast out demons. I can preach and teach the gospel of the Kingdom to a lost and dying world. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and so can you. I can do all He calls me to do, but I needed to be reminded that what He created me to love is important, too. It is not useless in the Kingdom and it can...and does...bring honor and glory to Him. No, it doesn't always look like those leaders that I walk with...but they don't always look like me either and that's okay. That's how it is intended to be. Just as a human body has many parts and functions...so does the body of Christ.

You are you. You are the only 'you' there is. No one can be you...but you. Whatever it is that He created you to love and do, do it with all your might and do it for the glory of the Lord. If you've fallen into the trap of comparison and lack, or been told by a lying enemy to keep your feelings of inadequacy to yourself...please break the silence and be set free. If you've seen yourself or your giftings and talents as less than what others walk in, repent and give thanks for the person He created you to be. You were born for such a time as this to fulfill a destiny and purpose. If that's baking cookies, then bake cookies. If it is painting pictures, paint pictures. If it is writing songs, write songs. If it is travelling from country to country proclaiming the gospel, then start packing. Whatever it is, know that it is no small thing to the Father...

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17