

BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

7/5/2010

Thinking bout' What I'm Thinking bout'

As a little girl, I would stay with my great-grandmother whenever I was out of school for any reason. She was in her seventies around that time, but she was such an incredibly strong and wise woman, that I never really paid attention to her age. She had taken a bad fall at some point in her adult life, but doctors were scarce, and in the south during those days, they were not always attentive or sympathetic towards African Americans. So her body was old and frail from not having received the appropriate care for a broken hip. She moved slow, but never slothfully. In my mind, the unhurriedness of her stride added to what everyone knew to be the deliberate and decisive nature of her demeanor.

She loved us great-grands purely and unconditionally, and this love drew me like a magnet. I was intrigued by my great-grandmother to no end; she could not make a move without me. She would whistle old hymns as she moved about the house, attending to its upkeep meticulously. No matter how mundane the assignment, each one was as exciting to me as anything in the world, because we did them together. She would teach me and make me feel as though she was as amused to be in my company and I was in hers.

The completion of each chore, no matter how small, would require a rest. And as we sat in our usual resting spot, like many times before, I waited and watched my great-grandmother, anxiously anticipating our next move. It was during those times, the reprieves from chores, that my fascination peaked. I wanted to know her thoughts. Would she deliver to me some jewel of information that would help me understand her better? Could I know why and how she loved us so? What could she tell me that would complete my delight and set me apart from all the others she loved so well?

So when the whistling stopped, and all was silent, I would ask, "*Mah Eula, whatchu thinking about?*" With hardly ever a deviation, she replied, "*Hush, chil...I'm thinking bout' what I'm thinking bout'.*"

This was a time when children were not allowed an entrance into *grown folks business*. My great-grandmother couldn't fathom a world where an adult would unload their worries or cares on a child's impressionable mind. I suppose that even my posing such a question breached a line never before crossed by her children or the grand children before me. So I was no doubt treading upon uncharted ground, stretching the boundaries of what was considered acceptable by the most royal member of our family.

Slightly frustrated by her answer, or lack thereof, I acquiesced without further inquiry for the moment; satisfied that the opportunity would present itself again, on another day, upon another rest.

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Looking back on it now, I know beyond any uncertainty that the thoughts that consumed my great-grandmother's mind were those concerned with our well-being. Her greatest desire and ambition was to ensure that her home was for us a refuge from the world, and believe me it was. It was to me, the most loving place on earth. So much so that I consider it an integral part of my foundation.

My great-grandmother understood the love of God in Christ. The revelations from His Word that you and I enjoy today, were not readily understood during her time, but as much as she could, she put on the mind of Christ. Even with limited understanding, her thoughts were primarily occupied with the care of others. She understood God's love, and because that love was backed by thoughts of faith and gratitude, she was able to move heaven and earth to make the impossible possible. There was no such thing as not enough food on the table. There was no such thing as no place to sleep or no room for more family. All of us were treated like kings and queens because of her love. Within her heart and mind the love of God in Christ was just that strong.

So many of us are emotionally exhausted, down-trodden, and miserable because we haven't learned the lessons of God's love. And we have no excuse, because others before us most assuredly passed them along. We beg God for the blessings we seek without even a thought that we might need to dig a little deeper, and love a little harder.

The walk of Christ is about service—service to our families, our friends, and our communities. This is made never more clearer than in John 21, where Jesus asked Simon Peter a very simple, yet poignant question:

John 21:15-17 (The Message)

15After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Master, you know I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

16He then asked a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Master, you know I love you."

Jesus said, "Shepherd my sheep."

17Then he said it a third time: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was upset that he asked for the third time, "Do you love me?" so he answered, "Master, you know everything there is to know. You've got to know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

"Feed my sheep." This is our call to service. Each and every Christian living, or who has ever lived, has a duty to fulfill this call.

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Of course Jesus Christ knew that Peter loved him, but Jesus wanted to also make sure that Peter understood that the loving was in the doing.

Love is an action word. It's a commitment, and commitments requires work. It requires the kind of work that encompasses the fulfillment of our responsibilities and obligations as followers of Christ. It is in HIS service that we carve out our purpose and realize our calling.

"I'm thinking bout' what I'm thinking bout'" was my great-grandmother's way of telling me, *"don't you trouble yourself about what I'm thinking, because I'm praying. I'm talking to the Master and He's working it out! He's working it out so that you don't have to do anything but enjoy being a child."* She had this kind of faith because she saw the bigger picture, that it wasn't about her. It was about what she could do for those she loved.

We've made great strides in modern society. We have much to be grateful for, but when it comes to the things of God, we need to go back. We need to remember from whence we came. Jeremiah 6:16 (NLT) says *"So now the LORD says, "Stop right where you are! Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it."* God has not changed, neither has His Word or His love. We need to remember this, because as we go back to the Godly way, we can't help but go forward in love.

1 John 4:7-10 (The Message)

⁷⁻¹⁰ My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

In loving memory of Eula Mae Bryant (1895-1981)

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