

June 17, 2015



FAMILY DEVOTIONS

THE PROMISED LAND

"This is my command-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 NLT

Our Almighty God had a plan for Israel and He gave Joshua the responsibility to claim the territories which God had purposed for His chosen people, The Promised Land. He gave them instructions. He gave them promises...He promised His presence wherever they went...and He promised them victory as they trusted and obeyed Him...Almighty God instructed them to be strong...to be courageous...and careful to obey His Law...careful not to turn to the left or the right, instead, to trust Him...to follow Him...to obey Him...and then, and then... they would be prosperous and successful...in their Promised Land!

There is no doubt that our faithful God assigns us territories in this life... He gives us instructions...and He gives us promises...No matter what age we are or what stage we are in, His instructions and His promises apply to all of His children...

THE PROMISED LAND - FAMILY

There are certainly many moments in parenting which can challenge, frustrate, and even terrify the most experienced parents...And for me, I trembled at many of my first responsibilities as a parent, having never stepped there before... having never held an infant...ever. There were many other moments as a parent when I trembled at the unknown...and sometimes at the known...

The Truth is that as the Lord led me into my Promised Land of Family... He was and is faithful to give His instructions...His Promises... just as He was faithful to the Israelites so many years ago when they were afraid of the daunting enemies... Almighty God was there. When I was afraid as a parent...fearing that I would mis-step or mess-up...Almighty God was there... faithfully leading me into the Promised Land of my Family...and He was and is always there...always present!

FAMILY TIME

One of our most effective and meaningful Family Time opportunities actually occurred in our classroom during our home-school years. We began each day with a visit from our principal, Mr. Dad and a brief Bible time. We used a simple devotional, purchased at a charity thrift store, consisting of devotions from various passages of scripture from each book of the Bible.

My children were intrigued by the story of Joshua as he led the Israelites to make their claim promised to them by God. And what child or adult does not love and stand amazed at the account of the crossing of the Jordan River, at flood stage...when God pressed back the rushing waters to give His people passage...God protecting every one of the Israelites, keeping His promise of His presence...then, Joshua commanded twelve men to pick up large stones from the middle of the river bed and to carry them on their shoulders back to their camp. Joshua built a memorial as a sign to the people... reminding them about their great and powerful God Almighty. (Joshua 3&4)

My children had just experienced some challenging and some scary things in their lives and were spell-bound as we talked about the great and mighty things that God had done in our life as a family...and some specific events which we all believed God had orchestrated in the health and well-being of our son. They recognized that the God who went with Joshua and the Israelites was the same God who was going with them... with our family.

A MEMORIAL

On that morning, February 20, 1996, we left the classroom to go outside and gather some stones in order to build a memorial, celebrating the great and mighty things which God had done in our family...in the lives of our children. And, I placed the stone memorial on a shelf in our classroom, with note cards written by each child listing three things that they knew, that they were certain of... things that God had done for them... Adam was certain that God had protected Him and saved his life when a horse had reared and flipped over on him in a calf-roping accident. And Christie was certain that her family was God's gift to her



THE PROMISED LAND



Today, I remembered. I unpacked the box (from our move from the ranch two years ago,) which contained the rock memorial. I carefully inspected each stone to find the initials of my children...and I found the note cards with their lists of what they knew about their faithful God on that February morning, almost twenty years ago. Like Joshua and the Israelites...we too made a memorial on that day, so that we would never, never, never forget what God had done...But more importantly, that we would remember and know who God is, the Great I AM...and that we, today, have relationship with the One True God.

And, on this morning I remember...I thank Him for His presence... for His mercy... His grace...and for the gift of my family...

And, every day, every year, our great God Almighty shows and proves Himself faithful to give instruction...and faithful to keep His promises. He never forsakes His children...He gives courage and strength to His children...always.

MAY WE SERVE HIM

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."
Joshua 24:15 NIV

This beautiful, wonderful, merciful, loving, gracious, powerful God is worthy of honor and of praise...the honor and the praise of our Families...

I pray that during this refreshing gift of Summer time that you and your family commit and re-commit to serve the LORD with your hearts and your lives... each moment of each day...as you inhabit and prosper in your Promised Land... your precious Family!

Grab your Bible, journal, a pen and some TIME.
Invite your children to do the same...
and enjoy the print-outs included for the young ones.
(You will need their crayons or markers!)

Then gather around the kitchen table or throw out a blanket on the lawn.

APPLICATION

Read the story of Joshua, from a children's Bible, and discuss God's faithfulness. Discuss the value of obedience and the consequences of disobedience.

As you and your family celebrate family time, I invite you to talk about, to remember all of the amazing, the great, the wonderful things which God has done in your family, for your family and through your family.

You may want to build a memorial so that you and your family will always remember... always remember... Be creative and brainstorm ways your family can construct something to commemorate this wonderful time!

Then, years later, you will look back and see and be amazed...

Summer Blessings!