

July 15, 2015

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

A photograph of a white stone statue depicting Jesus and Peter. Jesus is standing, wearing a long robe, and Peter is kneeling in front of him, looking up. The background is dark and leafy.

"A third time he asked him,
Simon son of John, do you love me?"
Peter was hurt that Jesus asked
the question a third time. He said,
"Lord, you know everything.
You know that I love you."
Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep."
John 21:17 NLT

♥ TOUCHING HEARTS ♥

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The final words of people are incredibly important and profound, revealing much of their heart, often reflecting their priorities and their convictions. Some of the final words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John after His resurrection, before His ascension, leave with His followers, profound instruction and encouragement. It is beautiful that, after His resurrection, our Lord first appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene, who not only wept with heartbreak and despair at His crucifixion, but we are told that she wept at her discovery of the empty tomb when she came to serve her Lord by tending to His body. As Jesus gently spoke her name, "Mary", she immediately turned around in recognition. Then, her love and dedication to her beloved "Rabboni, Teacher, were clearly displayed as she proclaimed to the disciples... "I have seen the Lord!"

The Presence of the Lord brought joy...His Presence brought hope...His Presence brought love. When Jesus appeared in the midst of the terrified disciples, He spoke to them, "Peace be with you!" and His words stilled their anxious hearts... and His Presence brought peace...His Presence brought confidence and belief to a doubtful and skeptical Thomas. And His Presence brought forgiveness, restoration, mercy, grace, and unconditional love to a bereaved and distraught Simon Peter.

The final instructions to Peter came through the question which Jesus asked not once, but three times, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" There is no doubt that through Peter's previous three denials of His Lord, his own disgust and disappointment in himself, and the bitter and agonizing grief at the death of His Master, he had recognized and carefully examined his love for Yeshua Christ.

SIMON, SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?

And Peter answered... "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you..."

Because our Lord, Yeshua Christ is the Master Teacher, He answered Peter and gave Him specific instruction... "If you love me then you will 'Feed my lambs... Take care of my sheep... Feed my sheep."

We, like Peter and the disciples, are also left with the final words of our Lord, our Master... Yeshua Christ... we are left with His question, "Do you love me?" And we are mandated to follow His instruction, if, we in fact, love Him...

May we answer His call and follow His mandate to, Feed His Sheep... May we serve and feed the hungry and the thirsty... literally. May we lead as a shepherd leads his flock, his friends and family, co-workers, acquaintances, strangers... to tend to them and to protect them, to run after them, to watch over them, to restore them. May we teach them the precepts and the Truth of their Almighty God... King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Shepherd of their souls...

♥ SYMPATHY OPENS OUR EYES... ♥ COMPASSION COMMANDS OUR SERVICE...

For some of you as you serve... you will go to the nations... some will go to another state or another city... some will go across town to a neighborhood or community... some, to a ministry within your local church or next door or down the street to a neighbor, to your work-place or school and some of you will go into the next room in your home. As we serve in these places, as we serve His children, as we serve His people, we sit at the feet of our Lord and serve Him with our hearts, our souls, our minds, and through the Spirit within us.

May we teach our children to serve in the name of the Messiah, Yeshua Christ. May we never measure the value of our service by the miles we travel, by how fast we run, or how loudly we proclaim, or by how hard we try... For often the greatest and most difficult miles are traveled into the next room as you care for a child or a loved one. Sometimes, we must struggle, or hobble, or limp to serve as the Hands of our Lord... Sometimes, the message of Hope and of Love comes through a whisper or a written note...or often, through your silent presence... Yes, a multitude of miles have been traveled in obedience... Powerful words have been written and spoken in obedience...and lives have been given in obedience... And, yet, it is true that for all service lived in His name, there is a promise... Always, always, our Lord bears with us and bears for us our load and our burden when, with sincere faith, we serve in His Holy name, for His glory and unto Him, in submission to, under the authority of, Jesus, following wherever His Spirit leads and, May we teach our children to run toward those in need...and to serve with open eyes...with open hands as we live our lives

♥ TOUCHING HEARTS IN THE NAME OF JESUS! ♥

APPLICATION

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.

Read together:

A third time he asked him, Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep." John 21:17 NLT

Then the King will answer, I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me."
Matthew 25:40

Discuss what Jesus told Peter to do if he truly loved him. Does Jesus ask us to do the same thing if we love him? Explain how serving comes an overflow of love for Jesus.

Discuss the meaning of service, and talk about examples of service. (Contributing to the welfare of others, helpful acts, beneficial and kind acts...serving)

Ask each family member how they feel when they are helped or are served? How do they feel when they have the opportunity to serve?

Discuss ways your family can serve one another in your homes. How can you serve or tend to the needs of your neighbors? Your friends? Your local church?

Discuss the importance of watching for opportunities to Touch Hearts in the name of Jesus! Enjoy your Family Time as you serve His Kingdom! #bekingdombuilders