

**Journaling the Journey**  
**"Quickly Get Ready"**  
**Genesis 18:6**

How does one begin to put into a few words the amazing journey the Lord has us on? Each time I am asked, my heart is thrilled to share. To God be the glory, great things He has done!

How intimate is our God with His children! I have found it to be true that He diligently watches over every detail of our lives to perform His purpose in and through each of us. Looking back through my journal entries many times leave me speechless at my Father's love for me!

It is an incredible journey, full of joy, wonder, adventure, waiting, listening, pondering, seeking, learning and so much more. I have discovered that nothing is by accident, that there is purpose in all things. I have also found that God is faithful to confirm in many different ways what He specifically has made known to us about our individual journeys. He is so good!

A year ago, I found myself restless, questioning my purpose, what I was to be doing. I yearned to be in full time ministry and was frustrated that so much of my time was spent in front of a computer screen, creating training manuals and courses for secular companies. Then I read the story about a man and a rock that changed my whole perspective. The story told of a man who was instructed by his boss to push against a rock. No other instruction was given. The boss left town and the man diligently set out to push against the rock with all his might. He pushed, and pushed and pushed. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not budge the rock. The man fought discouragement and the strong temptation to give up, as his friends thought he was crazy, and it all seemed so useless. But he didn't. Day after day, he continued until his boss returned.

"I'm so sorry! I just wasn't able to move the rock," the man cried out. His boss responded, "I never told you to move the rock, I asked you to push against it." "But why, I don't understand," the man replied. "Look at how strong you are now," the boss explained. "You have built up much endurance and perseverance. This season of pushing against the rock had much purpose."

I could relate to this man in the story as it had seemed that the season I was in didn't make a lot of sense. That the work I was doing was not accomplishing anything for God's Kingdom. Knowing that God was working out His purpose brought much relief. When I found myself becoming discouraged, I would immediately remind myself to keep pushing against the rock!

Shortly after this time, I learned about another use of the rock and that is to grind wheat. In other cultures and Bible times, women would grind grain with the use of a rock. The more the women would press the rock against the grain, the finer the grain would become, resulting in flour. The very finest flour was known as being fit for the king. I was elated! Even though I truly didn't understand exactly what had changed, I knew that God was telling me that I was no longer just pushing against the rock, but that I had fine flour to grind for Him. The seemingly mundane things took on new life.

In the later part of November, God started working in a new way in my life. A dear friend of mine, Susan Bunnell, called me seeking advice on what Bible translation I would recommend. Her mother-in-law had just been diagnosed with advanced stage cancer and was released from the hospital to spend her final days at home with her family. She (Patsy) was hungry to be in the Word. I was out of town when Susan called, but stopped by the house later that night to visit with Patsy and Susan. Little did I know that this was just the beginning of a difficult, but amazing journey with the Bunnell's. As I read God's Word to Patsy, Susan referred to me as a pastor. I never thought of myself, or anyone else that way, unless they were an actual "pastor," but soon understood that this is

a role all of us play at one time or another, when we make ourselves available to minister to God's hurting children. Just days before Patsy passed away, Susan cried out to God, as I held her tight. I couldn't even fathom that just two weeks later, we would again be clinging to each other as Susan mourned the death of her own daughter, Natalie, who was killed in a car accident.

Through the days that followed, we, (my husband Paul and I), cried out to the Lord to flow through us to help meet that grieving family's needs. In ourselves, we were at a loss as to what to do and say, but as Susan continued to call us their "pastors," we accepted this role, realizing that we were totally dependent on God's grace. During Susan's deepest hour of grief, she chose to turn to God and surrender all, literally *all*. She grieved...yes...deeply, but she also rested in the power of the Holy Spirit and was anointed with much revelation. As she visited with her husband's chaplain from work, she was overwhelmed with the sense that a mission work was to be done in Thailand. (Her youngest daughter had just returned from being a foreign exchange student in Thailand). When he asked what the company could do for the Bunnells, she shared the vision the Lord had given her. As time passed, Susan felt impressed that she was to go and prepare the way for the "pastor." Susan asked us then if we would be willing to go, if it was the Lord's will. Yes, I told her, but I don't believe we are to be the pastor, but that this person will actually be raised up from amongst their own people. Perhaps we are to support the pastor through training and prayer; I thought of the New Hope materials. Leaving these thoughts in the Lord's care, I did not ponder it further for quite some time.

Hungry for more of the Word of God, I felt led on January 1, 2010 to begin studying God's Word by reading from a portion of several different books of the Bible each day. I started out in Genesis, Psalm, Proverbs, Isaiah, Matthew and Romans. As I read, I asked the Lord to open my eyes to what He was speaking to me that day and to direct exactly how much He wanted to me read from each book. As the Holy Spirit highlighted certain Scriptures, I recorded them in a journal. I marveled at how there was a central theme to each book that was highlighted throughout the readings of the entire day. God's Word is truly living and active!

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, my daughter, Allison, and I were prepared to go to the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, MO, with a group from New Hope. We were so excited. We had the blessing of going before and knew how anointed this time is with the Lord. I could sense in my spirit that something new was happening. Due to frigid weather and other circumstances, the trip to IHOP with New Hope was up in the air, just hours before our departure. I went before the Lord in prayer, trying hard to lay down my strong desires to go and seeking His will above mine. As we waited for Cindy's call back, I heard plainly, not audibly, but still very plainly the words, "Get ready, you are going." I remember exactly where I was standing at that moment in our living room. Confident of what I heard, I quickly took a shower and put the final items in my suitcase. I was so sure that we were going, that when Cindy called to say that they had confirmation from God that we weren't to go, I was stunned. How could both of us hear from our Abba Father so completely opposite of each other?

As I fell on my face before God, I was overwhelmed with feelings of being lovesick for Him. I hurt so and struggled to understand why. As I stayed before God and in His Word, God again whispered to me, "Child, get ready, you are going." I began to ponder in my heart, Lord, is this message not about IHOP? Does this have anything to do with Thailand? Another principle that God is teaching me is that when He highlights the same word(s) over again in a short period of time, to pay attention! I've learned to record the word(s), ponder them in my heart and to wait on God. His confirmation is on the way! Just one day later, when Allison and I went to IHOP on our own, someone prayed with me, sharing that God had revealed to them that I had "graduated." I was overjoyed. To graduate from the pressing against the rock, to "get ready, you are going," thrilled my heart so. But what exactly did this mean?

Another person prayed with me and said that our deliverance would be like the acacia tree. She explained that the acacia tree flourishes in the desert, and all who see it marvel and say, "This can only be done by the hand of

God." Her comment immediately took me back to a dream I had had last fall in which I saw a large hand in the sky. In my dream, I knew it was the hand of God, but I did not understand why I dreamt this. Now I did. I knew God had confirmed a powerful truth that day in our lives. That what was about to happen to us this year, would be *by God's Hand* and for His glory, not by man's. Isaiah 41:20 (Amp) says: "*That men may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.*" When I shared this with my husband, he said, "I don't understand what that means...By the hand of God." God delights in teaching His children and I am convinced that He set out that very day to show Paul what "by the hand of God" truly means!

On January 12, 2010, I was reading Genesis 18, when the Holy Spirit abruptly stopped me at verse 6. "*So Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly, get ready three measures of fine meal, knead it and bake cakes.*" My journal entry cries out to God: "Lord, what are You telling me? What is the significance of this verse? Here were those words again, 'quickly, get ready,' Lord, what does this mean?" Approximately a year ago, the Lord had laid it on my heart to simplify. I began to see that this was no casual instruction, but that He really meant it. I knew in my spirit that part of the "quickly, get ready" process would mean for me to take more action than just giving away a sack full here and there to a local charity. I resolved to work harder at simplifying as well as finishing the projects that I have started, so that when it was time to go, whenever that was, that I would be ready.

As I kept pondering Genesis 18:6, I identified the fine meal with grinding the wheat into fine flour fit for the King. I knew that God had said I had just graduated from that season in my life, so I marveled at the realization that the fine meal was ready to be used. However, what does three measures mean and the rest of the verse? I have found that as we meditate on God's Word, He is faithful to reveal its mysteries to us. It was several days later when I learned that one of the biblical meanings of measure is "a time of stretching." On January 19, 2010, I was driving to Jefferson, Iowa when the Lord brought to my mind the interesting fact that Paul and I had lived eight years each in the following towns: Chariton, West Union, and had just finished our 8<sup>th</sup> year in Centerville. All times of stretching for us. The biblical meaning of eight is resurrection, regeneration, new birth or commencement. It suddenly dawned on me that the three measures of fine flour were a culmination of the 24 years (eight years each) of our married life. It was in Chariton that Paul first asked Jesus into his heart as Savior and I rededicated my life to the Lord. Our walk as one in the Lord began at that time. What a sweet realization that all those years of taking one trip after another around Mount Sinai, of what seemed like one failure after another, was instead preparation for the fine meal to present to the King!

Besides God's Word, I soon learned to pay attention to dreams. In the midst of uncovering the treasure of Genesis 18:6, I had a dream early one morning. In the dream, I was a part of a musical with children. I wasn't directing it, but actually singing right along with the other children. We rehearsed the songs and one of them in particular caught my attention. It was a song about monkeys. We actually acted out behaving like monkeys. After the rehearsal, within a short period of time, it was time to perform the musical. I encouraged those sitting on the sideline to join us, but everyone just sat there. When the piano player began to play, I quickly turned my attention to finding my place in the music. However, I seemed to have lost my place. I shuffled frantically through the pages. As the musical continued, I suddenly realized that we had missed the "monkey" song. Even though we were in the middle of the performance, I cried out, "Hey, we missed the monkey song!" The music continued. I cried out again and looked up. Much to my surprise and dismay, we had no director! "Stop! We have no director! We need a director!" The curtains parted in a nearby room and I could see many people just staring back at me. I continued to cry out that we needed a director and that we had missed the "monkey" song, but no one responded. In a split second, I awoke from that dream.

What was the meaning of this? I shared the dream with Susan. She immediately responded that the place that Julianna had stayed in Thailand was nicknamed the City of the Monkeys. "Father, is Thailand in need of a director? What kind of director?" I pondered in my heart, "Are we going to Thailand?"

Just a week later, I dreamed of my husband leaving with our possessions and returning with just three suitcases standing neatly in the trunk of the vehicle he was driving. I questioned him about whether we would need our "bedrolls" that he had just given away, but finally concluded that we must not. After awaking from this dream, I asked, "Father, are we to get ready, get mobile to the point of literally fitting our belongings into three suitcases? Does this represent three of us that are going, or since Paul and I are one, does this represent Paul and I and two other people? And, why did I call our bed a bedroll? That is not a term we use today!" Hmmm.

During the first week of February, the Lord dealt heavily on Paul and my hearts. We both agreed to consider going to Thailand if the Lord called us. Early Sunday morning, of February 7, 2010, the Lord spoke clearly to us through His Word, Jeremiah 1:5-12, calling us to a decision, "will you go wherever I send you?" "Yes, Lord, Yes!" "Then step out before the church and make this declaration." We did. The following day, the Lord led me to read Joshua 1:9, "*Be strong and very courageous.*" We soon found ourselves very grateful for this instruction to be strong and courageous and for the stake that was put in the ground when we stood before the church. We had entered into a time of questioning from others that could have easily lead us to questioning if we had indeed heard from God. However, there was no doubt!

As time passed, the urgency to quickly get ready, get mobile, was stronger. Paul felt impressed that we needed to have training first before going on the mission field. We were aware of several mission groups, but wanted to be specifically led by God as to where we should go. Our hearts leaned towards Texas, as we have had the opportunity to visit some of these mission groups a year prior when Allison was at Teen Mania in Garden Valley, Texas. We sought the Lord for confirmation of His will. Through a variety of signs, God made it very clear to us that we were indeed to go to Texas first. (This in itself is another amazing story!) As I sought the Lord on when, one day in God's Word, the Holy Spirit highlighted 2 Timothy 4:21: "*Do hasten and try your best to come to me before winter.*" Wow...o.k., what should we do next?

Should we sell our home and possessions? Should we have a rummage sale first? On June 5, 2010, when talking with Katie, our youngest daughter, out of the blue, I stated, "I believe we are to have an auction first and sell our stuff." I reasoned that we could then take this money to fix up our home to sell. Where did this come from, as this had not been a thought we had ever entertained. In fact, it seemed backwards to the world's standard. Shouldn't we sell our home first? That very day, I mediated on Proverbs 16:1, "*The plans of the mind and orderly thinking belong to man, but from the Lord comes the wise answer of the tongue.*" I was stopped in my tracks. This had just happened. We are to pay attention to what we say! As I shared this with Paul, he immediately confirmed that we should have the sale first. Paul contacted Jan and Dick Allen, who immediately offered to have our auction for us. July 1<sup>st</sup> was set as the date.

Two days after the sale, Paul was looking through the ads of the Nemo Trader. He found an ad about a 1990 Wilderness Yukon 26-foot camper for \$3,000, in excellent condition. We mused that the camper was the same year as when Allison was born. After everything was paid after the sale, we had right around \$3,000 left. Was part of being mobile to mean actually having a camper? For years, Paul and I had dreamed of this very possibility that we could go from place to place, wherever God would send us and to help with whatever need there was...much like the TV series "Promise Land" that we use to watch on PAX TV. Was this desire coming true?

I agreed to go with Paul the next day to look at the camper, but I wrestled in my spirit, was this God's will? I had thought that the money from the sale was to fix up our house to sell. I desperately needed clear confirmation on God's will for us. Paul, as the head of our home, longed for the security of having a roof over his family's head,

no matter where God sent us. I longed to be led by God through my husband, but also found myself in torment over this decision. During my Bible study that morning, I systematically read in Isaiah 41, as this was where I had left off previously. You can only imagine my excitement when I read, "I will plant you in the wilderness, the cedar, acacia, myrtle and wild olive tree. " *Wilderness!* I exclaim. That was part of the name of the camper in the ad! I searched for the deeper meaning of this verse. As I studied out the word "plant," in the Hebrew language, I found one of the meanings to be: "send out." Again, I exclaimed, "Lord, are You saying that You will send us out in the *wilderness* (this camper)?" I also couldn't help but reflect, do the four trees listed in this passage represent Paul, Allison, Emily, and myself? At this point, Katie, our youngest daughter, had already made the decision to go to Luther College and we knew that she would not be traveling with us, at least not at this time. I had a delightful time with the Lord in studying out the meaning of each tree and again pondering many thoughts in my heart.

Since I believe that there is great importance in the meaning of names, I also looked up *Yukon*, the rest of the name of the camper. I was delighted to find that it means: "Great River." This immediately reminded me of the great river of life flowing through each of us...the Holy Spirit and Jesus—the Word.

As we traveled to Kirksville to look at the camper, I continued to read in Isaiah. By this time, I was in Isaiah 43. You could have pealed me off the ceiling when I came to verse 19, "*Behold I am doing a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*" This was all the confirmation I needed. I had peace!

We were amazed at the *excellent* condition the camper was in. What also thrilled us was that it had been owned by a pastor and given to his daughter and family. This family had the opportunity to sell the camper a week earlier, but felt in their spirit that this was not the right person. When we came, they knew that they were to sell it to us. God is so good!

As we traveled home that night, we pondered if our van, with 255,000 miles would be able to pull that camper all the way to Texas. Paul went right to work looking for a more suitable vehicle. Two days later, as Paul was on the verge of purchasing a used truck for \$1950, Allison shared with us about another "old" truck she saw for sale at someone's home near her work. We immediately drove over to check it out. As I stood on the doorstep of their home, visiting with the wife, I couldn't believe my ears as I heard her husband tell Paul, "I am giving you this truck." He went on to explain that the Lord had laid it on their hearts to give that truck away, but they didn't know to whom, until we drove in. Wow! We praise God, Jehovah-Jireh, our Provider! Within days, we had a camper and a truck! Both straight from God's hand! Now Paul knows exactly what that means! We were definitely closer to going! The only thing left was our home and extra vehicles to sell, pictures and papers to sort through, to help Allison, Emily and Katie with sorting through their belongings, and a few other odds and ends!

During this time, in my Bible studies, I was now reading of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. I marveled at the similarities of our situation, as I related our mortgage and other debt as being Pharaoh, keeping us in bondage in Egypt. How I long for the promised deliverance! God, in His great mercy and love, repeatedly has highlighted in His Word for me to take my position, stand firm and see the deliverance of the Lord! Yes, Lord, Yes! I believe and receive that!

Earlier this summer, we had two buyers interested in the house. One has since purchased a different home, and we are unable to contact the other. We wrestle with whether to fix up the house, or to sell as is, knowing that if we are to fix up the house, that provision will be made to do so. Since God is the owner of this home and knows the buyer, we have diligently sought the Lord on what to do. Paul and I desperately want to sell the home God's way, for His glory! Currently, we have put an ad in the paper, a sign in our yard and are waiting for further directions. Whether or not our property sells before we leave is not for us to say. We are earnestly listening every day for God's instruction and when the word, "Go" is heard, we will go. I am confident that God will make this

clear to my husband, since he is the head of our home. *(I look forward to sharing with you later how God reveals this to us. We guard ourselves from making the same mistake as Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, being careful to not force things to happen in our timing. We wait expectantly on our Lord, knowing that His timing is perfect!)* Each day we work at making sure that when that day comes, we will be ready. There have been signs that the day is approaching quickly.

One sign, in particular, has been the new bridge placed over the lower reservoir. God brought this to my attention earlier this summer, when the bridge was placed on the park lawn. It was many weeks before a crane came to lift the bridge into place. During that time, I sensed strongly in my spirit that the bridge was a sign that God was making a way for us to get to the other side. The week of our sale was also the week that the bridge was put in place! A coincidence? No, I'm confident that God delights in giving us confirmations of His promises along the way. He is making a way for us! I believe that there is more to the significance of this bridge than I am able to share at this time. I hope to be able to share it very soon...for God's glory!

People ask us almost daily, "what will you be doing and when are you going?" We respond simply, "When God tells us." Our hearts are passionate toward the needs of orphans, human trafficking prevention, rescue and restoration efforts, agriculture through Mercy Ship missions, and are especially drawn to Thailand and Africa at this time. However, we lay our dreams, passions and burdens down before the Lord and seek His will for us above all! We believe that part of the reason to go to Texas first is for our daughter Emily. There is a Christian campus in Tyler Texas that provides living accommodations, work opportunity, spiritual nourishment, plus so much more for adults with disabilities. Dr. Leaf, a Christian, who is a brain scientist, who specializes in how the brain works and how we learn, lives in the Dallas area. There are also physicians and dieticians at Dallas Medical Center who specialize in a specific diet for those with seizures. I hold fast to Emily's healing, for God said so! I am excited for Emily, at all the possibilities for her there to help her in being all that God made Emily to be, and to do all that God made Emily to do. She is certainly a gift and has a purpose to fulfill, for the glory of God!

Lately, as the days pass quickly by, the Lord has given me a new passage to mediate on and to hold fast to, Hebrews 10:35-36 (AMP) – *"Do not fling away your fearless confidence for it carries with it a great and glorious compensation of reward. For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance to perform and fully accomplish that which is the will of God and thus receive and carry away and enjoy to the fullest that which was promised."*

God has made it clear to us that this journey we are on will not be accomplished by man's efforts, but only by His hand and for His glory. I am confident that God is making a way for us, where there seems to be no way. I am confident that He is leveling all mountains that are in the way, and straightening all paths. I am confident that He is and will do exceedingly above and beyond all we could ever think or imagine. We are seeing this come to pass, and my husband and I declare, this is indeed by the Hand of God and for His Glory! Praise the Name of Jesus!

Delightfully His!

*Cathy Berner*