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Daily Devotion



The Rose

With all the talk of the flu and with Valentine's Day just around the corner, my thoughts return to an experience I had some years ago. Some sort of a virus had kicked up my asthma. Since I don't like to do things the easy way I chose to have this little problem during a very bad snowstorm so the doctor thought the only way I could get to the hospital was with an ambulance and even the ambulance got stuck! After an exciting ride through the snowbanks, I arrived at the hospital and stayed there for four days. I also stayed four nights. During my first night I looked around my private room and wondered if there would be enough room on the windowsill for all the flowers I was sure to receive from my many friends. By the end of the second day, I had only received one bud vase with carnations. My husband had not even brought me flowers. Actually, that was partly my fault since I had made a grave mistake early in our marriage. He brought me flowers one evening while we were really struggling financially and I said, "Honey, don't buy me flowers right now, we need to save our money." Well, obviously he only heard the "don't buy me flowers" part when I had hoped he would hear the "right now" part. Since that time I had seldom received flowers. Perhaps he will read this and all of that will change. Finally, on the fourth day, I saw some hope on the horizon. My sister in law, Shirley, brought me a beautiful long stemmed red rose. While there was only one rose, it was one ROSE. I carefully put the rose in the small vase containing my only other flowers. It gave me something to look at and it was absolutely perfect in every way. Late the next morning when I finally got to go home, I had someone else carry the other flowers, but I personally carried the rose. I shielded it in my coat from Michigan's harsh January temperatures. As soon as I arrived home, I immediately put the rose into a vase of its own. I put it right beside the kitchen sink so I would remember to water it. Daily I checked the water level knowing I needed to take good care of the only rose I received. By early February, I was amazed at how long that rose was lasting! I decided it must have something to do with all the love and attention it had given it. On Valentine's Day of that year my husband ended his "no flowers" years. My friend, Laura, who worked at the post office right next door to the flower shop, had a little chat with him when he picked up the mail. She told him he would be a big hit if he brought me flowers. Actually that day she had told all the men of the community the same message. He took her advice and came home with two long stemmed red roses. I was thrilled and impressed. Now I had three red roses. That was pretty much a lifetime record. Immediately I found a vase, filled it with water and set the lovely flowers on the table to grace the table for the special Valentine dinner I had prepared.

Part way through the meal, I looked at the two rose containing vases. I was amazed at their similarity despite the fact that one rose was nearly three weeks old. I got up from the table to take one last close look at this amazing rose before I headed to the phone to call the Guinness Book of World Records people to notify them of their need to send a cameral and investigator so my rose could be featured on the front cover of their next edition. I discovered that while the rose was still as perfect as ever, the stem seemed rubbery and almost plastic. I thought perhaps that stemmed from old age...after all my legs had become more rubbery looking with age. Still amazed at my little BUDdy, I touched it very carefully and that was when I discovered it was a silk rose. For more than two weeks I had been watering a silk rose. At first I felt disappointed that I had not received a real rose. Then I laughed and decided it did not make a difference. The real gift was the love, not the rose. The real gift was that someone had loved me enough to drive 60 miles round trip to spend time with me in the hospital. The love was real even if the rose was not. My smile continued to widen as I thought about the word ROSE and what a huge difference it had made in my life. I opened my Bible to I Thessalonians 4:13-14 and read, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe Jesus died and ROSE again so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him." That is the REAL ROSE. That ROSE brings me hope and happiness every day. That ROSE will never fade or die and because of that ROSE I will never die. That is the only ROSE that really matters in my life and in my death. It is not a ROSE I have to hope someone will give me. I have already been gifted with that ROSE by Christ Himself and no one can ever take it away from me. Enjoy life. Smell the roses and most of all remember the One who ROSE!

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