

Freedom's Gate

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“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;”
 Psalm 127:1

These words were quickly spoken to me, by the Lord, when my mother-in-law asked if I would write this article. I had to chuckle because she said, “Do you think you would have time to write a Mother’s Day article?” At that moment, I had one crying in the baby swing, one standing behind glass doors letting me know the separation between us was too much to bear, 3 playing contently on the floor, and one sitting beside me patiently waiting to continue his math lesson on multiplying double digits. Was I too busy to write an article? If my day was based on that question, my teeth would never be brushed!! “So,” she said, “pray about it, and let me know.” I hung up the phone and asked the Lord if there was anything He needed me to share. Quickly, the verse was dropped in my spirit, “Unless the LORD builds the house...”

These days, we don’t ‘labor’ or ‘tarry’ over direction for our lives. There are no hidden prayer cues to ponder for days, or hours of praying in the spirit to receive direction. The Lord and I are on a black and white, need to know NOW basis.

It wasn’t always like that. Twelve years ago, we would think we heard something and labor to receive, then question if we truly did hear it right, then stand firm in faith...seemingly empty handed.

You see, ‘the house the Lord builds’ is built on a sure foundation. It is a deep rooted tree. It is years upon years establishing revelation knowledge in our hearts. It is slow and steady growing. It is the root system that you cannot see. People come to look at your ‘tree’ and say, “Is that all the bigger that is? That has been growing for a year, something must be wrong.”

Nick’s and my ‘tree’ was our family, our children. Before we were married, we knew that we wanted at least 6 kids, be business owners and live on an 80 acre farm...our greatest dreams. After five years of marriage, countless words from the Lord with clear direction for our lives, we still had nothing!!! No manifestation of anything. Loving people would say, “Maybe you just aren’t suppose to have kids, you know you really can’t afford the big farm these days.” (Small tree growing) But, we were digging deeper, with no apparent fruit.

Then the Lord spoke, “Begin the process to adopt.” We were elated with this direction, we couldn’t wait. We were confident we had heard from the Lord, He was building this house. Two years later, no change. “Where is this tree Lord?” So the roots begin to go

deeper. We would define our stand with scripture and declare such things as, “I am a joyful mother of children” (Psalm 112:9), “Happy is Nick, whose table is full as olive plants sitting round about him.” For seven years, this was our stand, (little tree growing). People couldn’t see it, but it was growing.

Then we found them, (the tree was growing bigger) 3 beautiful supernatural children in St. Petersburg Russia. On August 14, 2001 we stepped off the plane in Ft. Wayne, Indiana with our family. Seven years of joyful emotion running rampant...joy truly came in the morning.

Instant motherhood, life was wonderful. Nick was now a business owner and we lived in a beautiful five acre home. What could be better? Nearly two years go by, and we are just beginning to say, “awe, this is it!” The Lord begins to bless us with 3 more natural children in the next 3 years.

The tree seems rather large now. August 14, 2006 we baptized our three older children in the pond that was dug by their grandpa, dad and uncles on the 80 acre farm that we now own. I am pregnant with our sixth child. In November our Olive came, our peaceful branch.

I am truly pinching myself in this house, “the house the Lord built”.

The Lord would say to you, “You are a tree planted by the water, you will bring forth fruit in its season. (Psalms 1:3) Establish what you are rooted in, and let it grow.” Nick and I had seven years of a root that you couldn’t see. We were growing deep, not out. Today we feel like the mighty oak, strong and firm, not doubting and above all, at complete peace. Within 5 years, He gave us all that we had been believing Him for. This is a glorious house, “the house the Lord built.”

Now, we realize, it only gets bigger from here. These 6 kids have a purpose far greater than we can imagine. This 80 acre farm is greater than we could think and the purpose of Nick’s business is far reaching beyond our asking. We are entering into another growing stage. This is a stable house, “the house the Lord built.”

In the poem, “The House that Jack Built,” the story begins looking at the house; but, in the end you will see the house began with “the farmer sowing his corn, (seed), that fed the cock, that woke the priest, that married the man all tattered and torn, that kissed the maiden all forlorn...” On the story goes.

This is the “house the Lord built.”

~ Linda Pranger

The House the Lord Built

A Mother's Love - a Child's Joy

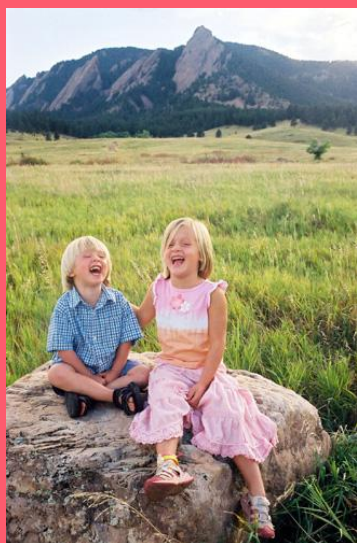
A mother’s love is something so powerful that you cannot describe it in words. When you add Jesus into a mother’s life, He makes her love even more effective. A mother who is **in Jesus** can express His love to a child, not just her own. Jesus’ love is compassionate, caring, prayerful, and firm because He died to save us. Not everyone operates in this love, but you can; all you have to do is accept it. For some this love is natural, they don’t even realize they are operating in it. For others, it takes a lot of Jesus to get it done.

My sister-in-law is a perfect example of showing this love. About

two years ago, she found out she was pregnant with a baby that had a cleft lip. Sometimes people will terminate a pregnancy when they find out the baby has a cleft lip and possibly a cleft pallet. That wasn’t even an option with my sister-in-law and her husband.

They didn’t know until their daughter was born, that along with the cleft lip, she also had cleft pallet, both which were a severe case. Thanks to all of the prayer, she didn’t have any of the syndromes that usually accompany this condition.

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- Every wise woman builds her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands. Proverbs 14:1
- A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. Proverbs 15:1
- A word fitly spoken and in due season is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Proverbs 25:11
- Charm and grace are deceptive, and beauty is vain (because it is not lasting), but a woman who reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord, she shall be praised! Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates (of the city)! Proverbs 31:30-31
- Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly, and well (with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness), but you excel them all. Proverbs 31:29

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A cleft lip is when there is either one side or both sides of the lip that are bunched up by the nose. It is like a little pile of skin. The mouth never closes all the way, there is always a hole. The cleft pallet is where there is no roof of the mouth. The mouth is open to the nose and the only way the child can breathe is through his/her mouth. The cleft pallet makes it very hard for them to eat. A special bottle with an extended nipple is needed to go back to the throat. These children have to eat a special way until the pallet is closed up.

I am not going to write about the emotions and the struggles they went through. Instead, what I am going to tell you is what I've witnessed. My niece is one of the most joyful kids I know. There is a big difference between happiness and being joyful. Happiness is a choice; joy comes from the heart. She has been through more surgeries than many people go through in an entire lifetime and is looking at more and yet she is **still** the most delightful child to be around. You would never know the pain she has been through. Most people would say it is just her personality, but I think it has a lot to do with the love her mother shows her. My sister-in-law takes joy in her children; she loves being around them and taking care of them. She is a stay-at-home mom and I've heard her say this is her job and it is what she has chosen to do.

I have watched her after every surgery. She was so calm and patient as she would sit and rock my niece and try to make her comfortable. She never got frustrated when she couldn't get her to settle down; she just kept loving on her. I know that it took many nights of no sleep, a lot of prayer, and patience to get through it. But they **did** get through it and were blessed along the way. One of the blessings was an awesome doctor. He would always pray with them before the surgeries. That prayer would put them at ease and they were able to

relax during those surgeries. Another blessing was a very supportive family. There were always a few of us there with them during surgery, and those that could not be there in person were there through prayer.

My sister-in-law is caring, yet firm with her kids. I'm not saying it is always easy because it isn't. Raising children can be hard at times, but it is a **very important** job. She demonstrates the love that everyone should have for their children and it shows. They are joyful, content, secure, and very well behaved. They are definitely their mother's crown and they will rise up and call her blessed. (Proverbs 31:28)



Her love doesn't only extend to her children, but to other children in need. She started making bracelets in my niece's honor to help fix other children with cleft lips. The proceeds from these bracelets go to an organization called Operation Smiles. They fix children with a cleft lip/pallet of all ages in other countries at a cost of \$250. Many of these children are older and if they have both the pallet and the lip, it is difficult to eat, drink and talk. My sister-in-law has already made enough to fix one

child. I guess you could say it is her ministry.

On every bracelet is a laugh charm because her favorite thing about her daughter is her laugh. She is extending her heart for these children, and her love, the love of Jesus, to others by making these bracelets.

Every mother that is in Christ can have this love. All you have to do is operate in it – it is yours for the taking. I'm not saying that once you receive and operate in this love that your children will be perfect and you will not have any problems, because they are kids in training. But don't give up and go back to the old way because the product of the new is so much better. The product of this **new love** is very joyful, happy, content, and secure children.

~Cortney Albaugh