



Shiloh Messenger

December 2007

Brown Paper Packages

Recently one night I awakened to a memory of an old secular song that I had loved as a child. **“These are a few of my favorite things”** One verse was stuck in the replay of my mind over and over. **Brown paper packages tied up with strings.** I was intrigued on how simple but how profound it was. I began to think on all the commercialism, advertisements, materialism, glittery blitz and bling of our world today. No one would normally be drawn to a brown paper package tied up with a string underneath a Christmas tree. Yet we would readily choose the one brightest, glistening, and beautifully arranged with perfect bow. It is easy for us to be caught up in all the hype, the fine and the showy. It is a temptation to be discontent with what we have, and what we look like. This is evident and manifested in our Nation with all of the tremendous unnecessary spending and credit card debt. The average American household has 10 or more credit cards. According to Barna Research, the average balance on a credit card is seven thousand dollars. In my estimation of these findings this has bondage written all over it. Monetary debt is serious. Seldom do we hear anything about simplicity as an essential of the spiritual life. If we are to strive to be Christ like, it behooves us to be rid of much of the clutter in our lives. It will require strict discipline. The distractions of our world are many, but the discipline will be worth while, for then and then only will there be time to cultivate the things of the Spirit that are so vital to our daily living. What warrants a truly satisfied life? *Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6)* Few people these days know anything about being content. *Jesus said “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 NLT)* Christ’s life is a glaring example of self denial. Denying one’s self is always for the sake of another. It is others centered and therefore highly unnatural. Our nature is to be centered upon our own agenda. How I feel, how I look, what I think, what I want, what makes me happy, how I did, how I sound? Yet Jesus made Himself of no reputation. People missed Him and still do because He was not what they were looking for or expecting to see. People were looking for the razzle and dazzle. *The Bible says in Isaiah 53:2 that He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him that there is no beauty that we should desire Him. The Bible says in chapter 5:8 of Matthew, Blessed Are the pure in heart for they shall see God.* If we are not careful we too will miss Him. God does not compete with other things for our attention. He simply will let us be because of our free will. But oh how it saddens His Heart. He knows the best kind of life is not in worldly pursuits and temporal things. So much money and time are wasted on the temporal things of this life. Mega bucks spent on the latest new whatever, not to mention these clay pots that we live in. These tents are the temporary holding places for our spirits, yet we pamper them excessively. Could it be that they take first and center in our lives? Don’t get me wrong, I know we are to be good stewards of our bodies. We are to be careful to maintain our health so we can indeed fulfill our destiny for God’s Glory. I also believe we are to be clean and neat, but I think for the most we have become fine and showy calling attention to our self. I have given considerable thought about Mother Teresa and her death several years ago. Princess Diana died that same week. It is interesting to me that Mother Teresa got little attention regarding her death, but Diana got much media time for weeks and on up for months and years. One life was one of self denial for sure, while the other was accustomed to the lime light. One was not beautiful in appearance, She was wrinkled and leathery looking. The other was looking grand on the outside and dressed in the finest attire. I remember myself being upset that Mother Teresa got so little media attention while Diana continued in the spot light long after her death. The Lord spoke to my heart and told me that Mother Teresa got the desire of her heart, and her reward was great in Heaven. She lived out what John the Baptist said, “I must decrease, He (Jesus) must increase.” Over two thousand years ago there were many who missed Jesus and His lowly birth in a manger. We still may miss Him today if we look for Him in the extravagant. He shares company with the simple, those who have room for Him. The majority are on the wrong side in the pursuit of contentment, they think it consists in having and getting; on the contrary it consists in giving and in serving. I do not advocate that we must use brown paper and string this Season to make a statement of simplicity. It is an extreme illustration. However, we must be on guard with our lives. Is lasciviousness what we are wrapped in and tied up with the bow of selfishness? This Christmas keep it simple. Keep it pure. Invest in what will truly last. **“Come Dear Lord, and abide with me, and teach me the value of simplicity.”**

Debbie Fondren



**From
Shiloh Ministries Staff & Students**

Shiloh Ministries gives the LORD honor and praise for lives that have been delivered from a life of slavery. We celebrate Kingdom Life here at Shiloh. All of our supporters make a tremendous contribution towards lives that forever are destined for eternity with God. We ask and encourage everyone to give financially to help with the cost of restoring lives. It cost approximately \$500.00 a month to house one man. The LORDS Ministry at Shiloh is free to the men who seek restoration. It is a walk of faith for our financial needs to be met every month. Would you please consider being a monthly supporter? God always speaks to those He has asked to give. We believe that His people will respond out of a heart of gratitude for what He has done & continues to do for them. Thank you, for your generosity in giving & co-laboring with us in the LORDS Ministry at Shiloh. (Shiloh Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501C3 Charitable Organization)

Please be in prayer with us for the following:

Weed eaters for lawn maintenance & Gas Stove for kitchen meal's

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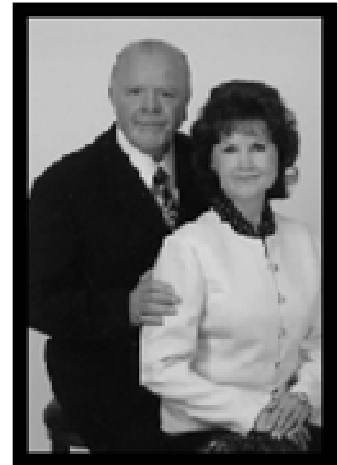
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**Rocky & Debbie Fondren.
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