

# Single Elegance: Hope That Shines After The Hurt

“My beloved spake, and said...Rise up, my love...and come away,” (Song of Solomon 2:10).

I didn't want to be single again, but I am. It's just me again. How do you walk in a phase of your life you weren't prepared to re-enter? How do you honor God in a consequence that feels so unfair, so painful so undeserved? But here I am, years later, still single; yet, in spite of the losses, disappointments, readjustments and sense of failure, experiencing God's joy, peace, hope, ability to forgive and accept His ministry of reconciliation. The empty spaces are filled with Him and I feel free and complete and continue to be amazed at how He is transforming my life and using me in ways that He never could have, had my life not been interrupted. Changed. Transitioned and Transformed.

It was a process, however, a process of experiencing deeper levels of love and forgiveness. I began owning what was mine to own, and letting go of what was not. I started surrounding myself with positive Christian family and friends. Then, I saturated my life in Bible study, prayer and service (2 Cor. 1:4). I learned to be still, I mean really still and quiet, and as I did, I could hear God speaking to me. He was leading and guiding me. Above that, He was my Counselor who has deposited joy and strength into my very soul (Nehemiah 8:10). He holds my hand (Psalms 73:23,24), and He has a surprise in store for me (Isaiah 43:19)! These promises give me encouragement and remind me that there is hope on the other side of hurt.

## Rejecting The Sense of Rejection

But there's a real enemy in the struggle, and the warfare is real! Our enemy wants to distract us away from our focus on God and His promises. In times of difficulty he wants us to believe his lies that we're unlovable, unworthy and unwanted. But he is a liar and God is greater (1 John 4:4)!

We look like God, and were created in His image. In my painful journey back to singleness, God revealed to me just how He has used me. In a recent conversation with my former pastor, he confessed to me that he and his wife had been talking about me. I was immediately curious about the details. Instead of speaking though, I paused and listened to what he had to say. My Pastor then explained how amazed he and his wife were at the courage, grace and strength I have shown in dealing with my intense trial. Perhaps God had allowed me to face my struggle to show him how to face his! He and his wife called me the epitome of “Christian elegance.”

Of course, I was overwhelmed and humbled. All I know is that God has allowed certain things to happen in my life because He trusted me to steward those trials well. He wanted to work out His purpose in my life through a painful process to grow/mature me so that He would be glorified in how I responded. I understand that what I experience here on earth is just a small sample of the ultimate spiritual warfare being played out over my life in a realm I cannot see. I feel somewhat privileged to be somehow trusted by God to represent Him and stand as His ambassador.

## **Stella's Second Act**

I remember having a difficult time and crying out to God for help. He impressed upon my heart to spend time with a special couple who are like family to me. As I entered their home, I was immediately surrounded by love, acceptance and support. The home cooked meal filled my heart with memories of South Carolina days as a little girl, and the safety of their home provided emotional sheltering for my wounded soul. The spiritual counsel made an indelible impression upon my heart.

As we stood in a circle to pray before I headed home, my pastor-friend gave me three life principles that I continue to treasure:

Stay close to God-increase your Bible study and prayer time.

Never give up-always believe that God can!

Always look good!-When people see you they should know that you're a daughter of the King so eat well, rest and exercise.

These three principles carried me through, when I felt lonely because the house was just too quiet. Or, when I was concerned about my future and my finances, when feelings of sadness would overwhelm me and my tears seemed to have no end, I would read the Word and pray! I would pray scriptures and sing scriptures and as I did, I began to heal!

### **Weary One, Rise Up!**

What is moving me forward is the knowledge that I am loved (Zeph. 3: 17, John 3:16). Let me shout it out: I am loved! I am valued! (Psalm 8:5, Genesis 1:27). My God speaks to me and has told me to rise up! Everything that I have experienced is not wasted and is working together for my good (Rom. 8:28), and has been allowed by my beloved (Genesis 50:20).

He loves me too much to be solely concerned with my comfort, so He has Divinely Ordained an alteration to assist in my transformation process (2 Corinthians 3:18). My latter will be greater than my beginning (Job 42:12) and he has told me that I will rise to new heights in Him. He has also told me to come away and as I have spent more time with Him I have gained a new perspective which has altered my mind and responses.

The definition of elegance is: Style, good taste, gracefulness, refinement, class, taste, chic and sophistication. Initially I looked at this definition and could not see any aspects of myself in the description, but I realize that all of us who have chosen to become new creatures in Christ will display Christian graces which, in essence, are the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23)! I am standing on the strength of Jesus Christ and by his power I am able to stand in silent strength and confidence.

Are you a Christian of elegance and grace in spite of your circumstances? Whether single or married, ask God to give you power to please him in the midst of difficult times.