

No Longer
ASHES

“To give unto them *beauty* for ashes...” Isaiah 61:3

5 Day Devotional

by Jenni Hunt, www.NoLongerAshes.com

DAY 1: I REMEMBER WHEN GOD CHANGED MY ADVENTURE...

by Jenni Hunt
www.NoLongerAshes.com

In finding out that her world was turning upside down as her family was moving to the frontier, Millie Keith went to visit her Aunt to share her grief.

"I thought you yearned for adventure." said Aunt Wealthy.

"I do! But I already know my adventure... it is finishing my studies, attending college, doing something grand... We have it all planned!... Mamma even gave me a verse, 'Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.' (Proverbs 3:5-6). I thought that meant if I trusted Him I could stay!"

"You mustn't ignore verse 5, dear. 'Lean not on your own understanding.'" said Aunt Wealthy... "Why I remember when God changed my adventure..."

*** Excerpt from the Millie Keith book #1 by Martha Finley.

Has God changed your adventure?

BIBLE READING:*

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

John 14:6

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one comes through the Father except through me.'"

John 1:14

"And we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, FULL OF GRACE & TRUTH."

He has changed ours... and we wonder what He has in mind. My husband was recently laid off. We have found ourselves in the thick of trusting the Lord with all our hearts... and CHOOSING to not lean on what we see - because frankly, in our eyes (or in that of the world's eyes) the direction we are headed doesn't make any sense. But we rest knowing that HIS WAY is not our own way and He is not bound by all of the things we are bound by on this earth.

It truly is a minute by minute choice though... isn't it? I find my mind wandering to worry about how this bill will be paid... or how that will happen... and I have to force myself to remember that our story isn't finished. That He has written the best adventure ever for our family (and yours too!)... that things are not what they seem to my limited vision and understanding.

Sometimes all we have to hold onto is what we know is TRUE in who He is - so **let's focus on who HE IS... His character... the great I AM.**

Time for a new
adventure...

IF YOU WERE ENCOURAGED BY THIS,
WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR STORY...
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DAY 2: I AM DOING A NEW THING... DON'T MISS IT!

by Jenni Hunt

www.NoLongerAshes.com

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"Be alert, be present.
I'm about to do something brand
new. It's bursting out!
There is it!

I'm making a road through the
desert, rivers in the badlands."
Isaiah 43:19 (The Message)

If you read the verses prior to
these in Isaiah, it talks about
miracles that the Lord has done
for His people... **BIG miracles...**
like the parting of the Red Sea. It
goes on to say in verse 18, "Forget
about what's happened; don't keep
going over old history."

In other words... remember those
big things I did, yeah, they were
nothing.

You just wait!

Then it digs into verse 19 where it
says, "Be ALERT, be PRESENT!
I'm about to do something BRAND
NEW and you don't want to miss
it!

He is doing a NEW THING... He is
making a NEW WAY... and it is like
NOTHING you have ever seen!

BIBLE READING: *

Isaiah 43:16-19

Thus says the Lord,
Who makes a way through the sea
And a path through the mighty waters,
Who brings forth the chariot and the horse, The
army and the mighty man (They will lie down
together and not rise again;
They have been quenched and extinguished like a
wick):
"Do not call to mind the former things, Or
ponder things of the past.
"Behold, I will do something new, Now it will
spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.

This speaks so richly to my soul...

A while back, my husband was laid
off from his job - and as he was in a
meeting with his boss finding this
out (we sort of expected it), a dear
friend texted me this verse from
Isaiah... We decided right then and
there that our family is on a God-
Watch.

Sometimes God allows the
impossible... and then
circumstances seem to get even
more impossible before He does
this new thing - but, we can rest
assured that it is coming!

**I don't want to miss this new
thing that He is doing!**

**As big as it is... this verse still
warns us that if we aren't
watching for what He is doing
we might miss it... and I want to
be a part of this new thing and see
the amazing work He does!**

**What about you?
Are you on a God Watch?**

BEHOLD, I will do something new,
Now it will spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:19

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DAY 3: THANKING WHEN I AM BREAKING

by Jenni Hunt
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These verses in Philippians have always comforted me when I am feeling anxious or full of worry... or when my spirit feels unsettled for some reason.

I find it interesting that the Lord gives us clear direction when we are feeling anxious... when we are breaking.

But, what is really cool is that this scripture clearly tells us that we have a choice when faced with worry.

We don't have to sit in it!

I think we are often deceived into thinking that we are stuck in a world of worry... look at this scripture!

"Be anxious for nothing... but in everything by prayer and supplication."

Do you see the contrast?

Oh, so many times I choose to be anxious... to worry about everything.

But, these verses say to be anxious for NOTHING. Instead, I can CHOOSE to come to the Lord... to pour out my requests to Him.

BIBLE READING: *

Philippians 4:6-9

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace with be with you."

But, it doesn't stop there!

"With Thanksgiving - make your requests known to God."

My Lord wants to know about my worries. He wants me to bring them to Him.

But, He wants me to 'package' them with thanksgiving.

Surely, this is not for HIS benefit!

Although, no doubt it fills His heart with joy when His children come to Him sharing thanks... I can't help but think that the real reason for surrounding my requests with thanks is for MY benefit.

Because whenever I do this... my heart begins to change.

And, the next group of verses tell why...

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will

guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

This is a promise, friends!

My heart changes because the peace of my Lord guards it when I come to Him with my worry and focus on what I'm thankful for... and this peace... WOW!

It isn't like the peace or calm we see in our world...

It specifically says that the world can't even understand the kind of peace the Lord gives His children when we come to Him...

And not only that... it GUARDS our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!

"And when I give thanks for the seemingly microscopic, I make a place for God to grow within me."
~ Ann Voskamp, One Thousand Gifts

What are you going to choose to be thankful for today?

THANKING WHEN
I'M BREAKING

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DAY 4: KEEP COMING BACK TO IT

by Jenni Hunt

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I cannot put words to how stressful buying our first home was for us. It sounds trivial... but, seriously. No words.

We closed three weeks late after being told we were going to lose the house...

Everything around me wanted to focus on my circumstances.

I questioned why we were putting in so much energy to fight for this house.

Everything in me was worn out and tired.

One morning... after I hung up with our mortgage broker I remember my conversation with God.

"This is impossible Lord... There is no way we are going to get this!"

"Stop looking at the circumstances and look at ME." was His almost audible reply.

"Okay..." Verses of encouragement and reminders of His character filled my mind... for about 30 seconds. And, then I was back at pleading... "But Father - there is no way!"

"Focus on me. Eyes on me."

BIBLE READING: *

Psalm 27:13-14

"I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord."

Matthew 14:22-33

28 "...Peter said to Him, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' 29 And He said, 'Come!' And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus... 30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and began to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' 31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'..."

Philippians 4:6-9

6 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

"Okay..." Psalm 27:13-14 comes to mind. I say it out-loud. I am at peace and my Spirit is still for another... 30 seconds or so.

"God... I am SO WEAK and tired! Even our mortgage guy is saying this is an uphill battle."

"Eyes on me."

"Okay." I quote Philippians 4:6-9... "Be anxious for nothing..." The peace that is promised when we choose to dwell on things of His character covers my mind... for about 45 seconds when my mind wanders again. Sigh.

My King and I had this conversation for most of the day. Me choosing to focus on Him... and not a minute later being distracted

by my overwhelming circumstances.

I am so human.

And, He knows it.

Makes me think of Peter... when He stepped out of the boat to walk on water with His Lord. His eyes solely on the Lord. But it didn't take long for Peter to see the waves around him. Oh, I am so like that... of little faith.

Here I am struggling to keep my eyes gazed on my King as we face our unknown adventure with my husband's job loss... an adventure that is sometimes disguised as a 'storm'.

I am a slow learner... **but we serve a King who is a patient teacher.**

Is Your Adventure Disguised
as a Storm?

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DAY 5: DROWNING DOESN'T LOOK LIKE DROWNING

by Jenni Hunt

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I was working on a website for swim lessons and came across some information about pool safety that caught my attention.

When someone is struggling in water to get their head above the surface for a breath... they could very well look like they are playing in the water and not struggling at all...

but, the truth of the matter is - they are deeply struggling.

In fact, they are drowning.

Drowning doesn't look like drowning.

We can go through life aware of those around us...

Maybe even asking how someone is as we pass them at church or in the grocery store.

Sometimes we get the opportunity to grab a cup of coffee with someone... and it looks like they are playing in the water and not struggling in this journey of life at all.

But, when we look closer... when we really pay attention, we see they are really drowning.

Or maybe you are on the other end... hoping someone will notice that you aren't goofing off even

BIBLE READING:*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Isaiah 61:3

"... and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor."

though you easily put on a show that everything is alright... But, the truth is, you are barely keeping your head above water... praying someone will pay attention.

Drowning doesn't look like drowning.

I think it is easy to go through this adventure of life acting like we have it all together. I was thinking about my own life and how I tend to do this.

If I'm honest, I'm not so sure I am looking to appear like I have 'it' all together... but, I do have a desire to want to look 'strong'. I want to reflect 'strength' that I long to have inside of me.

A friend reminded me that it is this weakness that is beautiful.

It isn't MY strength that I need to reflect... it is MY weakness.

**It is MY UGLY.
And He makes it...
HIS BEAUTIFUL.**

Here's the thing...

and I am completely convinced of this... We have to share our stories.

We have to share the real stuff.

If we don't share the ugly... we can't share the beautiful.

When we share our story of weakness or drowning...

others feel safe to share their own story...

and we find that these stories are beautiful.

Not only that - but, we get to be blessed to walk this journey together.

We get to arise and sing together and watch the transformation of our ugly... to His beautiful.

MY UGLY... His
BEAUTIFUL.

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...TO GIVE
UNTO THEM
BEAUTY
FOR ASHES...
ISAIAH 61:3

WELCOME

Welcome to No Longer Ashes.... my name is Jenni.
I am a wife since 1991, and a mother of 3 crazy kiddos. I homeschool my kids and run my own online business helping others learn about how to make a profit by sharing their passion online.
But, No Longer Ashes isn't about that... **it is about the adventure of following Jesus...** it's about sharing our stories.

**“If we don't share the ugly...
We can't share the beautiful.”**



I have been learning how important it is to share our stories. Our King is at work... and we have to share what He is doing. My story, is His story. His story of taking the broken and making it something beautiful. His story of redemption.

And, it isn't just my story...
it is your story too!

The Lord is always at work in our lives... even in the super dry seasons when it feels like He is so far away... this past year has been a year of trusting Him work... trusting Him to take the ashes of my life and turn them to beauty that only He can give. I am still on this journey... an I have a LOT of ashes in my life to let go of... but, it is my hope that somehow sharing some of my story will encourage you in your walk with the King... and perhaps you will want to share a little of your own story as well!

~ Jenni Hunt

Hope you enjoyed this
5 Day Devotional...
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it away and share it
with your friends.

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