

Word for the Year 2016 – Unplugged

Once a month, usually on the first Friday of each month, I tried to schedule a Karen Day. I'd go to a place where I could be alone, undistracted, away from home, unplugged from the phone and Internet with Bible, calendar and notebook in hand to seek God. Often I would go for a hike in the afternoon.

January

I went to a library out of town and spent the first couple hours organizing and decluttering my brain. Then another couple in Bible study. Broke for lunch and then hiked Long Hunter Deer Trail.

February

Another public library. Again, takes me awhile to unplug, declutter my mind. Bible study and a short walk. Meditating on joy.

March

Another library. Process some emotions.

May, June, July

May was a bust with the shingles.

In June I was still sick and traveling.

July was company and a daughter's wedding, but I managed to slip away for a couple hours to hike the Rocky Loop at Barfield Park.

August

Purpose

I took a 3.5-mile hike at Barfield Park. Humidity was very, very high with 90 degree temperature. I came to a bench, and I sensed the Lord wanted me to sit and rest. I began to see a vision in my mind. The forest started to recede and my body was flying farther and farther away from the earth. Pretty soon I saw myself being pulled in a little red wagon and three smaller wagons hitched to my wagon sailed along behind me. Each wagon contained a baby—representing my three miscarriages. One by one I rebuked anything that did not belong to God and soon each one of them floated away and their wagons unhitched themselves from mine. God was answering the question I had asked earlier about why I had the miscarriages. I am not ministering to people who have had miscarriages so it didn't make sense to me. He said that they served their purpose at the time. That it was what I needed at the moment. I was in training. The vision receded, I opened my eyes and I was back in the forest. I didn't ask for this. I didn't even know I was thinking about it. God is so good. He knows exactly what we need. And he answers our prayers and we don't even realize we prayed to him. What's next, Lord?

“I have one more thing for you today,” He said.

Idleness

So I keep asking the Lord if I need to go back to work during these two weeks of waiting for Josh and Katie to return and when Minna and Cheryl are out of town. But I have no urgency or sense that I need to go ahead with it. Instead, I have taken large portions of time to rest, to read, to recuperate, to exercise, and to write. And it's been glorious. But I keep asking the question. As I'm sitting here watching a leaf blowing in the wind, it goes from frenetic twirling to dead still. Sometimes it's going slowly around, sometimes very quickly. It is at the mercy of the wind.

And the Holy Spirit says, “This is your downtime. Rest and enjoy it, for frenetic times will come back again, and you need this downtime to be ready for it. Enjoy Me, soak in Me, rest in Me, and wait. Trust and then obey. I am the wind. I decide when you will rest and when you will run. But you will not run away from me because you are connected to Me. Trust.”

I laughed as Bob Dylan's song “The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind” came into my head.

September

Hiked the Old Stone Fort trails in Manchester where trails were not marked well. Unfortunately, I forgot to wear my hiking shoes, and also unfortunately the water was off at the museum station, so no restroom available. I was thankful that I'd brought water with me.

Lesson: I sat for a while on a log to watch the reflection of trees in the water. Jesus asked me which appeared prettier: the real tree or its reflection? I had to admit I preferred the reflection with its shifting patterns.

“But it's an illusion,” He said. “If you tried to walk on the water, thinking you could touch it, you'd find yourself coming up empty. The solid tree is the real thing.”

Later in the week, God showed me why I needed this lesson.

After the hike, I decided to go to the Manchester library. Though I was using my GPS, I seemed to pass it both coming and going and could not locate it. So I stopped at a gas station and was told, “It's just before Hardee's. If you get to Hardee's, you've gone too far.”

Still no library to be found, so I stopped at a fruit stand to buy some peaches and okra. I asked the owners about the library, and both of them instructed me that it was “just before Hardy's.”

Try #3 yielded zippo. Finally, I parked the car at a store and started walking toward Hardy's, checking each establishment as I passed by. Still nothing! Where is this mysterious building!? In spite of my instructions, I walked PAST Hardee's and lo and behold out of the mist appeared the illusive sign for the library. I chalk it up to the South where “left” means right and “before” means past!

November

Hiked Old Stone Fort. I wasn't sure what God had for me today. It began in my QT and came to me at the end of the hike. I was holding worry in my heart about the future. It sounds silly now, but I was apparently worried that I'd revert to childhood childishness in old age. Someone had once said that their dad, a godly missionary, began swearing in his dementia stage. And mentally (or emotionally) I took that fear on. Jesus assured me that I wouldn't start swearing in my old age! That was never a part of my childhood. Funny how lies get implanted—unwittingly, unknowingly. What an adventure life can be!