

Pete Campola

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To: jodester32@twcny.rr.com
Subject: today's devotion

Don't forget! Giffy's Chickie BBQ at Trinity Today! Get it while it's hot!!

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
October 20, 2005 Day 25

Introduction: We are all in *"this"* 2gether. No one is getting out alive. As we explore what it means to be in community through Rick Warren's [better together](#) it is essential that we tailor make this study to fit our communities. This devotional is meant to be a conversation starter. It is personal musings on the daily readings' subject. If another author is not noted then the opinions expressed are those of Jodi Haier and only reflect her understandings and her journey. If you do not wish to receive a devotional a day for the next 40 days, please respond to this email with a thoughtful "no, thank you" " Instead of just forwarding this *please* send people's email to me. I am not trying to be a control freak but I want to know where God's going with this. People viewing this on the webpage can contact the webmaster with any comments. THANKS! Jodi

Fellowship 2gether: "cultivating a life in common"

(1Cor 1:10) SIN! Murder! Treason! Infidelity! Breaker of Commandments! Infidel! Webster defines sin as an offense against God. But when was Webster ever considered the authority on God. My working definition of sin is anything that separates us from God. (not that I'm an authority, but I am THE AUTHOR) Today's reading asks us to call out our close associates when they are falling prey to sin. How can we determine if their behavior is sinful? Are we to be the judge?

Let's suppose that a close friend has a problem with over-commitment. They say "yes" before an entire request is made. You see them making one commitment after another and even making commitments for their family and friends as well. Then this friend shares with you how frazzled, anxious, and frustrated they are. They are in a bog of "nobody else will...", "but they need me to...", and "it's for a really good cause..." They are stuck in the problem process and can't even see a solution. You can be the light. You can help them list and prioritize the commitments. You can ask them to pray with you so the two of you can discern where God is in all this busy-ness. You can practice saying "no" to each other. Make it house-wide (office-wide, family-wide, church-wide) nay-saying extravaganza. Find a joking way to say nay, no, nada, nyet. You'll be amazed how easy this can become. Then when "your friend" needs to say no in any of the fore-mentioned areas everyone will be in on the joke. The stress will be diffused. Remember sin is not just the evil villain lurking, pouncing on our unsuspecting souls. Sin is anything that separates us from God. Let's help each other.

Grow 2gether: "accepting, affirming, and advising"

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16) Do you have junk in your trunk? Do you have a drain in your brain? Does your heart fart? Or is your soul on a roll? Is there something in your life that is holding you back? At one time or another I have said yes to all of these questions. My junk in the trunk were past mistakes that I couldn't let go of. (my mistakes and yours) My brain drain was sucking the life out of my relationships. I would over-think everything, assign blame, judge and assume based on body language, and extrapolate motives based on past precedent. My heart would fart out sulfurous bile on all those who dared love me. My heart was broken and hurting and everyone who loved me was to blame. My imagined expectations from other people (children, friends, peers, husband, society) held me firmly in the status quo. But God loved me anyway.

I can remember many times when I was not in love with my husband. I can't remember a second when I didn't love him though. Pick one person that you truly love. Haven't you loved them even before you knew them? John Wesley, (father of Methodism) calls that kind of love, prevenient grace. I wonder what would happen if we approached everyone with that type of love. We may not love someone's appearance or behavior, their choices or standards may

not be ours. Yet their junk in the trunk could be turned into wisdom. Their brain drain could be the critical fresh eye we need. Their heart farts might show the vulnerability that people who love risk. The person that is held back may be just waiting for a starting pistol. I think living and loving with prevenient grace is a way to make our souls roll. Watch out here we come.

Serve 2gether: “working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose”

(Phil 2:2) The quintessential Jewish grandma, backseat drivers, soccer fans and anyone wanting to set you up on a blind date seem to think that they know more about a topic than you do. In your mind, fill your vehicle with your entire small group. Some people may have to sit on each others laps. The driver has control of the music. Seatbelts everyone! Now as you drive on the thruway, outside of Buffalo, after a Bills game, everyone in the car is going to give you advice at the same time. Some will be advising you on your driving; others will be discussing the one bison brew you had 4 hours ago. One will be reminding you of all the things that you could be doing instead of wasting money on a stupid game. Another is cheering the home team and egging you on to join the celebration. Not a pretty picture, huh.

In today’s reading, Rick Warren would have each of us “warn each other every day, as long as it is called today, so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.” (Hebrews 3:13) Let me tell you if my small group acted like that group in the car, more than my heart would be hardened. If I simply told my group what help I truly needed and what help I wanted, I could smooth away a bunch of the chaos. We are in charge of choosing the changes. God wants to work through our lives and the lives of our small group members. We need to focus our energies so that we can hear a joyful noise and not the ratcheting criticism of our peers. The only person you can successfully change is yourself. Give others the help they ask for and then they will trust you enough to ask for more. Seatbelts, everyone!

Worship 2gether: “come 2gether in my name”

(Matt 18:20)

Brave

by Nichole Nordeman

album: Brave (2005)

The gate is wide

The road is paved in moderation

The crowd is kind and quick to pull you in

Welcome to the middle ground

It's safe and sound and

Until now it's where I've been

Cuz it's been fear

That ties me down to everything

But it's been love, Your love

That cuts the strings

(Chorus):

So long, status quo

I think I've just let go

You make me wanna be brave

The way it always was

It's no longer good enough

You make me wanna be brave

Brave, brave

I am small

And I speak when I'm spoken to

But I am willing to risk it all

Say Your name

Just Your name, and I'm ready to jump

Even ready to fall

Why did I

Take this vow of compromise?

Why did I

Try to keep it all inside?

(Chorus)

I've never known a fire that didn't begin with a flame

And every storm will start with just a drop of rain

But if You believe in me

That changes everything

(Chorus)

Go to www.nicholenordeman.com and listen to a portion of this song. Not only will you be inspired, but those around you will ask you why you are smiling. I love the question she asks: "Why did I take this vow of compromise?" Do we really think that a life with God on the margins is going to be easier? I guess it's all in how you define easy. In worship, let us fan the flame or light the spark, let us be the first drop of rain or the umbrella. I know that I'm singing, "So long, status quo... I think I just let go... You make me want to be brave..." And for the record, it is not only God's love that powers me like the energizer bunny, it's the love I feel from you as well.

Reach Out 2gether: "get others to believe"

(Phil 1:27) Time for confession: I have UNI-TOES. I know that I slammed Marguerite's feet.(with her permission) My turn is today. All of my toes look the same. They are all big toes, even the pinky toe. I think they're cute and cuddly. However, upon seeing them for the first time in Costa Rica, Cheryl said, "Aiee Chihuahua!! You are such a freak!" I don't have graduated toes like some or royal toes like my husband. I have UNI-toes. And since the Lord of the Rings trilogy I think they are turning into hobbit feet complete with leather bottoms and mysterious sprouting hair. Now, why the need to share? Well my feet, like Marguerite's and yours, were specifically made for God's purposes. I can't change them and God expects me to use them as the freaky gift they are.

What about yourself is impossible to change? (This is not a plastic surgery commercial, people.) Think about the people we are asking to join us. They may think that you want them to change the very thing they feel is impossible. And they may be right. Our job is to love God's freaky gifts before we understand them and then help people understand and use them. If God needs them to change he'll supply the resources and opportunities. I guess I'm waiting for a hedge clipper and a really kind pedicurist. Pumice stone, anyone?

BAWK BAWK CHICKIE BBQ- YOU KNOW YOU WANT IT! BAWK BAWK