



HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH

"When the Lord God looks down from heaven and sees the children of men, He takes no account of many things which are highly esteemed by the world. He looks not at men's money, or lands, or titles. He looks only at the state of their souls, and reckons them accordingly. Oh! that you would strive to do likewise! Oh! that you would value grace above titles, or intellect, or gold! Often, far too often, the only question asked about a man is, "How much is he worth?" It would be well for us all to remember that every man is pitiably poor, until he is rich in faith, and rich toward God."

J.C. Ryle

EVERY MAN
is pitiably **poor**
until he is rich in faith
and **rich toward God**



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WORDS TO INSPIRE THE SOUL



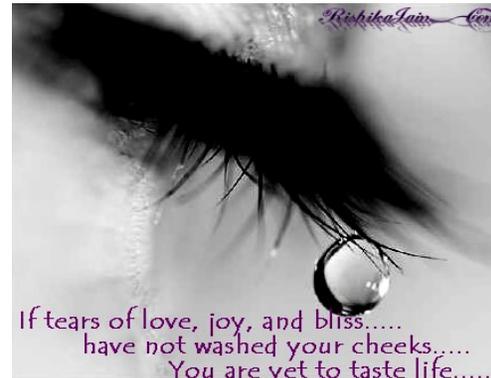
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A few years back I was hit with one devastating blow after another. They literally hit me at one time. It was an emotionally dark time for me. Did I lose faith in God? No. Did I lose faith in

People? Yes. Did I question God? Yes. Did he answer me right away? Yes. He told me to wait on Him. That was the most difficult, yet the only, thing that I could do. Being a woman who felt that she had to make sense of everything and always have control of every thing; or I at least believed that I had the capability and confidence to take control of any situation at any given time, my life made no sense to me and I had no control of my situation, not even one bit. For the first time in my life I was completely out of control. It sounds like a bad thing, and usually it is. But in God if you are out of control and He is in control then in no way is it a bad thing. It is exactly where he wants us to be. But, I was hurting. And although I had the love of my family (thank God for my mother, my father and my sweet son) I still felt alone and felt like a failure. I felt like I let my family down; the people who depended on me down; the church down; my son down and most of all myself down. I kept asking the question, where did I go wrong? I rehearsed over and over again each day of my life. I purposely did those things that I thought a wife should do. I did those things I that I was taught to do by watching my grandmother and mother do and achieve with great success. I listened to the advice of my pastor during the counseling sessions and I took the advice of my father when he said, "live and put forth every effort in a marriage and make sure that you have no regrets." Nothing worked. And because it didn't work I felt like I failed because everything had fallen apart. But I can honestly say that the effort that I put forth and the love that I gave that I would not change a thing, and

that I honestly have no regrets! But why did I feel so down, like a failure and worthless? Ultimately, I realized that as a woman I felt that I was no longer good enough. It was a blow to someone like me because I always had confidence in myself and failure was never an option. I never thought that I was better than anyone else, but I always felt that if they can do it, so could I. See I grew up overweight, but my confidence never let that stop me from doing anything. However, after my divorce myself esteem was at an all-time low. I had been in a place emotionally that I had never been before. I couldn't sing because of vocal cord damage which was always my outlet whenever I was going through anything. I sang my way through so many trails. That was my praise time. My home and family as I knew it, was no longer. My health had declined and my finances were being stressed. All of this struck me at the same time. Was this my Job experience? When I think back about those emotions of worthlessness, hurt, betrayal



and loneliness that I felt, all at the same time I realized that I was ex-

periencing depression. It makes me teary eyed to this day to think how far down I had gone emotionally. Women we must be careful when we feel like this because the enemy will use this and send people our way that will not be of any godly good to us. And that is exactly what he did. He put people in my life that did not add to my life. They made me even more miserable. Some people think that if someone is not adding to your life that they aren't taking anything away from it. Well, I beg to differ. If someone is not adding to your life; and if they aren't helping you grow in God, or even helping you reach your highest goals naturally speaking, they are taking away one of your most valuable possessions, YOUR



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TIME! "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." "The thief comes to steal kill and destroy. I came that you may have life and have it more abundantly." John 10:10 (NIV). Jesus not only gives life, but he adds on to it. We don't want people who are going to be there for the ride, but we want those people in our lives who will be there to add to our lives and we add to theirs. I was at a crossroad. Do I stay in this place of darkness, or do I get up? During this time God would remind me that I was the one that sang and preached about His love and how He can mend the broken hearted and the wounded soul. I sang and preached about how He could heal the sick and raise the dead. I believed it. So, it was time for me to live it. It was a struggle at first, only because the flesh sometimes feels comfortable feeling sorry for itself, but I had to do it. It's honestly easier to feel down than to work on feeling better. But I had to get up. I had a son to raise as a single mother. I had kingdom work yet to do. So for me to heal I had to clean the wounds which meant that all impurities had to go. To rid myself of any negativity, or anyone who did not add to my life was the first stage. That part was not difficult. Bye! However, the emotional part was. Breaking free of all of those negative feelings that were so heavy on me. I had to continuously seek God's face. There were times I would literally yell out and cry for the weight to be removed. It felt as if I would die at any moment with this weight on me and it would never be removed. But I had to want to get out of that dark place that I had gone deep into. There were days that I thought, wow God. Really? Are you really making go through this? You are God, so you just can't remove this from me, like right now. All I can say is that I kept going. I was determined to go a little further each day. There were set backs. I digressed at times. But I got up dusted myself off and started again. As I thought about my journey out of my dark place the hymn One Day At A Time comes to mind:
I'm only human, I'm just a woman.
Help me believe in what I could be
And all that I am.
Show me the stairway, I have to climb.
Lord for my sake, teach me to take One day at a time. One day at a time sweet Jesus
That's all I'm asking from you. Just give me the



strength To do every day what I have to do.
Yesterday's gone sweet Jesus And tomorrow may never be mine. Lord help me today, show me the way
One day at a time.

I cannot say exactly when I broke free, but God took me through the fire. And now I'm on the other side. He allowed me to see that even though I was going through that He was right there with me and that I was never alone. He let me know that the reason I even had the will to push through is because I was in Him and He is me. And the reason I could push through is because of Him. He will work the will and the do if we let Him, but let Him. The devil didn't stop harassing me. As God brought me to the other side it looked as if I had lost. I believed that I would have to work double time to get anywhere in God, or to get back to the place I was before all that I had gone through. But God told me that I will place you where I want to place you; give you what I want to give you; when it is time to place you there; and however I want to do it. He reminded me that time with Him is never an issue. It was difficult no doubt, but I am honestly grateful for the experience which was not the case at that time, but I was thankful to Him while in it. He wiped away my tears and bottled them up. He restored my soul to a place of joy and thankfulness. He gave me strength in my weakness. What I realized the most is that in despite all of the heartbreak; despite the sleepless nights; in spite my illnesses; and in the midst of the tears that I cried God had and has a plan for my life. My trails were temporary. Your trials are temporary too. So, whatever challenges that you are faced with remind yourself that God has a plan for your life and whatever you've sown in tears you shall reap in joy.
(Psalms 126:5-6)

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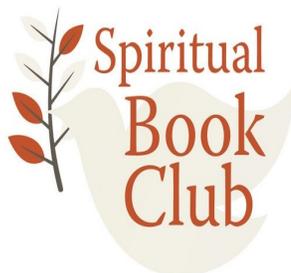
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