

Heart to Heart

Devotional Thoughts for Women

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Rizpah the Defender

With a heavy and sorrowful heart, she spread out the piece of rough sackcloth on top of a rock, her bed for the days and weeks ahead. It would be hard and uncomfortable, but how could she seek any comfort for herself while the bodies of her sons were hanging in the tree she gazed at in anguish? Her ears were alerted to the sound of flapping birds' wings and she jumped up, waving her arms madly to keep the foul scavengers away from her precious sons. Nighttime gave her no rest from her morbid vigil as beasts of the field were on the prowl, smelling death in the air. But at all costs, she was determined to protect her children – even in death.

Who was this woman named Rizpah who so passionately defended her sons? She was a concubine of Saul who bore him two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth. (II Samuel 21:8) Her name means “coal” or “hot stone”, and we certainly see her living up to it in her fiery devotion to her children. This event takes place long after Saul is dead, and David rules over the nation of Israel. At the beginning of II Samuel 21, there is a famine in the land that has lasted for three years, and king David is very concerned. After inquiring of the Lord as to the cause of this disaster, David learns that it is a punishment on the nation for something Saul had done. He had killed some of the Gibeonites who had a long-standing treaty with Israel since the days of Joshua and were supposed to be treated as allies, not enemies. David called the king of the Gibeonites to him to ask what could be done to make amends. His answer? *Let us execute seven of Saul's descendants.* David chose five of Saul's grandsons...and the two sons of Rizpah.

The Gibeonites took the seven men and hanged them on a hill as the harvest time was beginning, and there they were left to rot, but not if Rizpah could help it.

How far are we willing to go to protect and defend what is (or should be) closest to our hearts? Do we have the same fire and determination as Rizpah when something so important spiritually is at stake? Are we willing to:

- Suffer personal discomfort?
- Sacrifice our own wants and desires?
- Devote time and energy?
- Fight off enemies?

Satan is always on the prowl looking out for whom he can devour. (I Peter 5:8) He is seeking to destroy our children, our marriages, our homes and each one of us who strives to faithfully follow God. How are we protecting ourselves and those we love from such destruction? Do we have the fire and passion in our hearts to fight and defend what's worth saving?

Rizpah wasn't focused on her own comfort, her own desires, or what she had on her schedule. She devoted all of herself to protect and defend what was most precious to her. May she serve as a reminder to us to be vigilant, to be diligent, and to be faithful defenders.

~Heather Pryor

Ladies Bible Class & Breakfast – Mark your calendars for **October 21st**. We will continue our study of the book of Hebrews. Don't forget to read that entire book of the Bible, if you haven't already.

Lord, if You withdraw Your hand, there is no grace.

If You cease to guide us, we have no wisdom.

If You no longer defend us, we have no courage.

If You do not strengthen us, our chastity is vulnerable.

*If You do not keep a holy watch over us, our watchfulness cannot
protect us.*

*By ourselves we sink, we perish; when You are with us, we are
uplifted, we live.*

We are shaky, You make us firm.

We are lukewarm, You inflame us.

~Thomas A. Kempis

Search the Scriptures

1. "How can a young man keep his way pure? By taking _____"

(Psalm 119:9)

2. "Above all else, guard your _____"
_____ "(Prov. 4:23)

3. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and _____"
_____ "(Psalm 51:10)

Answers to last month's quiz

"They Said 'No'"

1. Who refused a bribe in Acts 8:20? Peter

2. Who refused payment for a miracle he performed in II Kings
5:16? Elisha

3. Who refused to accept a reward in Genesis 14:22-24?
Abraham

RECIPE CORNER

"She...provides food for her household." ~Prov. 31:15

Fall means apples! Apple cider, apple butter, apple pies...



CARAMEL APPLE PIE

- 1 unbaked 10-inch pie shell
- 5 large Granny Smith apples
- 24 caramels, unwrapped
- 2 T. water
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup plus 2 T. flour
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup cold butter

Peel, core and slice the apples, then place in pie crust. In a saucepan, melt caramels with water over low heat, stirring frequently until smooth. Pour caramel sauce over apples. In a bowl, combine sugar, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Cut in cold butter to make a streusel crumb topping. Sprinkle over caramel apples. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until apples are tender.
