

"TRULY I TELL YOU, UNLESS YOU CHANGE AND BECOME LIKE LITTLECHILDREN, YOU WILL NEVER ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

Matthew 18: 3



LIVING IN THE MOMENT

"Happiness, not in another place but this place... not for another hour, but this hour."

— Walt Whitman

INTRODUCTION:

Dear readers,

On your journey of life, do you recall a time when you paused and intently observed a child at play; a little one totally alone, yet thoroughly engrossed in a world of his own imagination? As an adult onlooker, it appeared that you could almost see the wheels turning at a very fast pace in his busy little mind; that seemingly was unaware of yesterday or tomorrow, but instead just "LIVING IN THE MOMENT." Not only did his facial expressions and physical gestures signal an interesting story plot that was in the process of unfolding, but was also accompanied by a variety of sounds coming from his own sweet little voice for added impact. Yet, throughout this precious time, not once did he notice that another's eyes were observing his every move; for at the moment, he simply had **"ALL"** he desired or needed. It was a time of total fulfillment!

Then, while watching this intriguing sight unfold, were you led to ask yourself, "Did I ever live in this wonderful world of childhood imagination; a time when the worries of the world were yet unknown and nothing mattered but the present joy of "just being"? How is it so easy to be in such a timeless state without being governed by a calendar or clock? Oh, to experience it all one more time!

Once upon a time, when this writer was but 5 years old, after all the festive events of Christmas Day had been unwrapped, she experienced one of these moments of timelessness; so impactful that it is still as fresh today as it was yesterday.

Although the family had just settled down and were all engrossed in processing the happenings of the day, in her little five year old mind, a desire took shape that turned into a longing so strong that it prompted her to ask, "Mom, can I put on my coat and go look at the sky one more time?" Probably being guided by the Holy Spirit, the reply from mom was, "Oh, all right, just for a little while!"

Folks, it was one of those dark, cold nights when you could almost see your breath form ice crystals in the air; a time so clear that nothing stood between your vision and the twinkling stars that served as a canopy overhead. Just like the child described earlier, this little girl was intent on a mission that absolutely nothing was to prevent. You see, she had come out all alone on this special night simply to live in a timeless state driven by the longing to locate a special star; the one that would tell her where to find baby Jesus.

Therefore, standing for what seemed to be the longest time, this tiny child was certain beyond doubt that one of the millions of stars that made up the heavens above her head blinked more brightly than all the others; a special gift bestowed on her from the Heavenly Father. In her mind, she had just found the star belonging to baby Jesus. Oh, how precious! Oh, how delightful!

Today, when processing this childhood moment through the lenses of an adult mind, this writer has surmised that, indeed, at this young age, a longing for God had taken wings and flown! It had not mattered what others thought, she was simply living in the present; a time for discovering a world larger than herself and her immediate surroundings; in a universe designed by her magnificent Creator.

Just recently another story that was brought to the writer's attention that will give us hope of once again being able to simply live in the present, was told by a wonderful, compassionate mother named Megan whose little girl was betwixt and between with her belief in Santa. Some of her classmates had already reached that hard decision, while other were still mulling over the facts. Fortunately, she had a mother that created a comfortable environment of being open for all questions and comments.

Therefore, having expressed her concerns to Megan regarding this puzzling dilemma, the little girl was transported to see Santa at a time when she could be alone with him; minus a rushed environment along with the freedom to simply have some questions answered.

Consequently, this little girl had the opportunity of sitting on Santa's lap and expressing to him her deepest feelings of concern regarding his existence. "Are you real or not?"

As a result of this carefully orchestrated situation, the reply this child heard will, undoubtedly serve as wisdom for her adult years to follow. Looking tenderly into her eyes, Santa replied, "Little children believe in me. However, there is a between stage; a time when people get older and no longer believe in me. It sounds like your friends are in that between stage. As Santa, I also visit residents living in nursing homes that are much older than you and your friends, and they believe in me for sure. They clap and smile when they see me coming every year." As the little girl took it all in, she was satisfied with the response. All because of Santa's wisdom, her dilemma was solved.

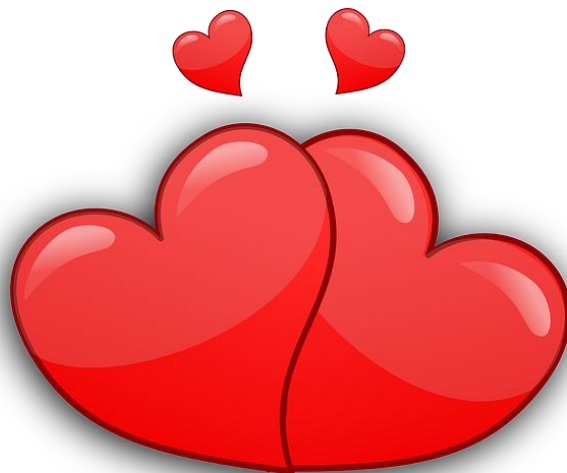
Ladies and gentlemen, the example Santa used regarding residents of nursing homes once again believing in him during their winter season of life was poignant, indeed. In order to substantiate his statement, all you need to do is attend a party held for them at Christmas time.



Additionally, as a volunteer ministering to them throughout the year, you will soon learn that their child like attitude toward life applies to almost every circumstance at this age. The Scripture from Matthew 18: 3 *“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven,”* fits their behavior like a glove. At this point on their earthly walk, all layers of pretension brought on by society at large matter no more. When viewing their own reflection in the mirror called “time”, they fully realize more yesterdays than tomorrows are peering back at them. Regardless, of this basic truth, instead of longing for the “good old days”, they choose to live in the present, savoring each and every moment.

Thus, just like the little girl that asked Santa the tough question, they choose to believe in goodness and see the best in every situation; not because their minds are old and lack mental acuity, but at this point in life, are filled to the brim with wisdom and courage. They have entered the deep waters of life and have not been swept away by the current, climbed the highest mountains wearing their cuts and scrapes as badges of honor, survived when their bellies growled due to scant food supplies, and, thus, fully recognize the important things in life.

Therefore, when a little child enters the building, all the basic principles regarding the importance of living in the present penned by the most highly regarded scholars, pale in comparison to what actually takes place. As an onlooker, when the hearts of a young child and a resident of a nursing home connect, truly, two hearts become one. Regardless of the generational gap, since both individuals are without the worldly blocks that prevent one from entering into a timeless state, a miracle appears to unfold right before the onlooker’s eyes. You will note they are communicating without words and have reached a depth of love that one can only desperately hope to attain.



ACTIVITY: Visit by Child/Children

SUPPLIES NEEDED: (Children from Community)

As you enjoy the following priceless photographs taken by volunteer, Myrna Jent, please be aware of the fact that nothing was staged ahead of time. This little girl's grandmother had come to a bazaar that was being held for the purpose of raising extra money for the residents' Christmas gifts when, without prompting, the little one began interacting with the residents. In all the busyness of the moment, her actions stopped the bazaar; all because two people, generations removed from one another, chose to **"LIVE IN THE MOMENT."** Enjoy!



"LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND."





"IT DOES NOT ENVY, IT DOES NOT BOAST."





"IT IS NOT PROUD. IT IS NOT RUDE."



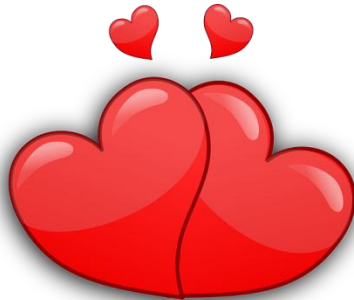


"IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING."



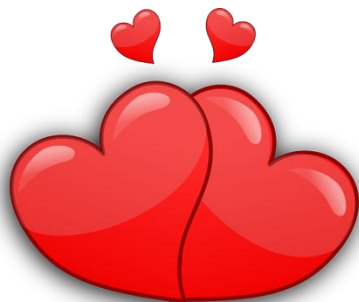


"IT IS NOT EASILY ANGERED."



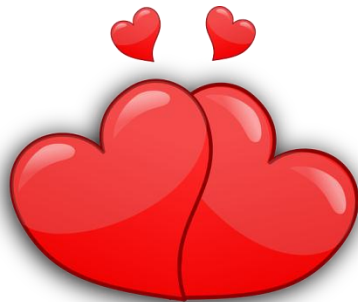


"IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONG DOINGS."





"LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL, BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH."





"ALWAYS PROTECTS, TRUSTS, HOPES, AND PERSEVERES."



"LOVE NEVER FAILS!"