



CEO Devotional – November 17, 2014
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Surrender

Psalm 23:1-2 *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His names sake.”*

Yes, I know Psalm 23 is a portion in the Bible that is to be read at someone's funeral. Maybe that is the very reason I have been nourished by the words written by King David. It has become my daily portion during the last 10 months as we moved away from ALL of our familiar surroundings, family, and friends in Lancaster County, PA. In many ways our move to Texas has felt like a death of sorts.

It all started when we decided it was time to think seriously about downsizing. Not much thought was given about the complexities of downsizing; we just knew we were at a point when it was necessary.

At that time we were approached by a man at our church who said that he was praying for us and each time he would pray he heard the word...surrender. He said he didn't know what it meant, but that it was big. My husband and I appreciated the prayers of someone we did not know and decided that we were already “surrendered,” after all, as a Christian, isn't surrender a part of what we do every day?

So we began the soul searching journey of “surrender” and I noticed stories in the Bible that I had read since I was a kid and found a type of surrender in every story. The story in the Bible that had the most impact on us is the story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22). I've read the story many times but this time I saw the gut wrenching, agonizing story of a man that was human in every way and yet willing to surrender his most prized possession, his son.

It appears that God spoke and Abraham was very quick to follow God's order. Abraham rose up early the next morning and took his son along with his servants on a three day journey. The story has only a few details about the journey and leaves me with a lot of questions about what he may have told his wife as he began loading up the mule. Studies indicate the approximate age of Isaac was in his mid-thirties. I wonder what the actual scene was like....did Isaac meekly surrender or did he resist his father? There's a lot about the story that we can only imagine, but in the end we can clearly see that their faith was tested, they surrendered, and God provided.

At one point in this process our daughter asked us, “Mom and Dad, what is your most prized possession?” I knew without hesitation that my most prized possession was my family and “The Family Center of Gap.” The Family Center was what we built from the proceeds of the sale of our company Auntie Anne's, Inc. We knew God asked us to build the center to meet the needs of the people in our community through counseling, the church, the nutritional center, the Daycare, feeding programs, and many other services. To think of selling everything we owned at that moment became reality for us and we asked the question more earnestly....you want EVERYTHING?

What began as a thought to downsize became a gut wrenching, life changing issue of surrender. We had a public auction of all we owned and packed up our house and my husband's shop and headed to Salado, Texas for the next season of our lives. As the days, weeks, and months have turned into nearly a year, we are grateful for the daily presence of Jesus and we can say without a doubt that God IS! He's not impressed with what we do or have, but BEING WITH Him and DEPENDING ON Him is what He longs for.

We downsized, we surrendered, and we took the leap of faith. We trust God as we wake up each morning and surrender again.... It has become our journey and the “peace that passes ALL understanding” has become our daily bread. Psalm 23:6 *“Surely Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of The Lord forever.”*