

Table Tweeting – Intro

Deep down tears – we all have them – some folks more often than others. Some deep tears are joy tears – but often they are not. Those sad tears seem to stick around longer.

Ross walked into the kitchen and was about to tell Hope, his wife of 40+ years about who he met at the hardware store a little bit ago. Before he got the first syllable out, he saw his silver-haired sweetheart seated at the table - head in hands weeping next to a box of Kleenex already in use.

He leaned slightly over his precious wife, placing one hand softly on her back and the other on her clasped hands on the table, about to fetch another tissue. In soft tones he asked, “Is your arthritis acting up again?” not really expecting a definite answer.

Hope's shaky tone didn't really tell whether her tears were joy tears or sad ones. Ross was about to learn they were both. She seemed to want to get it out and on the table, so to speak. Her husband had definite convictions about things and wasn't afraid to boldly make them known, when the time was right. But Hope cherished Ross' ability to listen; really listen. She described it as 'bone-deep listening with both ears.' Well, this was a time she needed a good dose of that, as she explained the tears.

Ross learned that while he was at the store, Tamara, the 14 year old teen that lived the next street over, knocked at the back door. Her eyes were red and her hair was a jumble. Hope had met her before but they weren't exactly 'friends'... yet. Mrs. Tappin, that's Hope, invited her in and to take a seat at the table, with a promise of a cup of cocoa soon to come out of the microwave.

Hope listened for a little bit. She reached out and touched Tamara's arm with one finger that signaled, “wait a minute. Slow down.” The teen wasn't what you'd call boy crazy, but she was headed that way. It was also easy to notice that the cell phone never left the teen's hand, like maybe it was her security blanket in some unfulfilled way.

The older woman began with, “before we go further, how about you turning that thing off. We'll talk about it maybe later.” Maturity in the faith, had, in times like these, always popped a particular verse into her mind, from Matthew 6:33a; “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...” But just at this moment, she needed to learn about teen ladies and how God was molding this one sipping her cocoa with shaky hands.

In the quiet moments between Tamara's sad tears and statements, Hope's thoughts raced around her kitchen with its appliances and utensils. Here she was right in the very center of the proof that her kitchen table was the tool most useful to God. Her thoughts worked at reaching down into Tamara's hurt and confusion to see a futile spot she could begin planting heaven-sent seeds. There'd be one row of joy, another of peace, and a long row of seeds of God's purpose.

It was really tough, I mean really tough, for Hope to hold back her own tears. She couldn't count the number of times she'd asked God to use her; to use her heart and hugs to make an eternal difference in someone's life. At this moment, she silently asked, “God will you allow me the high privilege of showing Tamara your love; real love that almost defies description?”

Coincidence certainly wasn't the reason that Hope's Bible was still on the table, from her morning feeding on God's words of life. The worn ragged pages were still open like a clear compassionate invitation to a time and place of green pastures and still waters; just the right healing place for hurting hearts; both young and old.

Mrs. Tappin slid her open Bible closer to the teen so both could read the words. But instead of starting to quote a bunch of words that likely would sound strange to Tamara, Hope asked, “I want you to place your cell phone right next to my Bible without turning it on. Will you do that?” Wondering what was going to happen next, the cell phone was hesitantly placed next to a Bible that looked like it had weathered many a storm, many on this very table.

“Tamara. I want to tell you about love; real love. But first I want to ask Jesus to help me say the right words to you, to mend that awful hurting inside you. Can I do that? Let's bow our heads and I'll

pray.” Even before Hope said the final amen, the teen felt like the rocks banging in her heart seemed to be softening. But the soil of soul must be prepared before seeds could be planted.

Mrs. Tappin spent the next few moments comparing the communication device and its batteries, phone number codes, and all the technical nuances required for texting with others. Some of the others the teen didn't even know or know if they could be trusted with their advice and confidentiality.

Hope then picked up Tamara's hand and softly placed it on an open page of the Bible. She began the comparison. She spoke with her lips but begged with her heart that seeds would find welcome ground to take root and grow. “Tamara, this book is a tried and true communication device that requires almost none of the requirements of your cell phone. But more importantly, these words to be devoured and trusted in, changes lives. I mean it. It changed my life into joy and purpose.”

More rocks were softening. Seeds would soon find a spot to grow. She continued, “the words from this Bible; this communication device can't even be compared with texting and linking up with others. The one who inspired these words loves you so much; each and every day; whether you are 'good' and when you are not.

Tamara, the shortest verse in this Bible here is, 'Jesus Wept'. Even though He made the worlds and stars and us; He wept. He wept because people didn't want to love and trust Him. He shed real tears because of all the people like the teenage Tamaras that try to fill their hearts with electronic stuff, when our hearts are really designed just for Him.”

The conversation finished about the time the cocoa did. Hope got to use a couple of her best hugs and her best 'come back soon' invite.

Well,

Ross now understood Hope's tears. They had to be tears of expectation; tears of a burden – a bone-deep burden for young lives lost among the buttons, batteries, and broken hearts.

The lesson to learn is that texting, teens, truth, and tears, all find their rightful place at a kitchen table like yours and mine. Be ready always with scripture open and cocoa in supply. But first always let scripture plant its seeds in your own heart; just for this day.

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