

Texting With Hope

Connecting That Counts

In two booklets

Texting With Hope might be seen as an adventure of 'Kitchen Table Missions'. It follows a thread of communication technology – smartphones and texting.

There are meaningful connections made here on several levels:

(1) a retired couple wanting to connect with their responsibility to missions. (2) A connection of understanding is made between two generations – silver haired seniors and students. (3) Texting With Hope connects responsible student use of God-given technology to be a blessing to one's peers. (4) Connect the Bible's minitruths (proverbs) with needed online content that builds character.

by
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by which teens can minister to tweens.

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Booklet 2 of 2

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[My Notes]

= 8 = Their Shoes

GRAM HAS FALLEN! NO BROKEN BONES!” was last Tuesday's tweet that speedily got the attention of all 14 teen girls in her every-Saturday kitchen table get-togethers. Moments later more tweets followed, indicating Gram, a.k.a. Mrs. Hope Tappin, had tripped on a rug at home, lost her balance and landed pretty hard on her left hip. Her retired husband, Ross, helped her into bed and applied some ice packs.

As one of the very first to join the get-togethers, Tamara was definitely a 'take-charge' type of teen. Just after her first class the next morning, Tamara called the Tappin's to get an update. The swelling had all but disappeared but the pain was continually reminding Gram she better stay in bed and fairly quiet.

Each of the teens had grown especially fond of Gram and her calm way of looking at every day challenges. All of the teens had clearly adopted her as their very special grandma, because they gleaned boatloads of comfort to be found nowhere else. Every one of the girls knew deep down, that Gram's back door was always open any day of the week for those super special hugs that seemed to bring a teenager's world into proper focus.

Wednesday afternoon about the time that school let out, Ross answered a knock at the back door. Deena and Trudy just couldn't wait a minute longer to give their beloved Gram a hug, a get well card, and a bright colored flower. Ross saw what great healing the girl's visit did for his precious wife, Hope. Deena explained to Ross and Hope that Tamara had organized the other teens to provide some food for the retired couple while Gram was on the mend.

Saturday morning there was a rather faint knock at the

back door. Ross recognized the visitor as Monica, one of Gram's Saturday brood. The teen stepped in the back door and asked if she could see Gram for just a minute or two. This was a bit unusual in that Monica was a rather shy person not given to join in any discussions with the others. Ross took a moment to see if Hope was up to a visit. He should have known that Hope was always ready and eager to touch base with her 'girls'.

Monica explained to Gram, “Gram, I'm not too good with words. I'm always afraid others will laugh at me. But my heart just pulled me over here and wants me to pray for you; with you. Ross thought, “Oh boy! Here comes more of that healing you could never put in a bottle or candy box.” Monica gently took hold of Gram's hand so gently, like it might be a fragile piece of china. The wrinkled hand, often wracked with arthritis, slowly pulled the teen's timid hand toward her chest.

Ross left the room thinking there was no better communication of healing for every kind of hurt, than a hug, hand-hold, and heart-felt prayer. As Gram listened to the halting words of prayer voiced by Monica, Hope blotted a couple tears with a nearby handkerchief. It was crystal clear that Monica's communication reached beyond just spoken words, or computer tweets, or any other communication gadget made by man.

The final amen to the prayer was spoken and a kiss was left on that wrinkled pained hand. Without another word, Monica headed for the back door, thanked Ross for his hospitality, got on her bike and was gone.

That evening, Hope got a call from the secretary of her church's Quilters for Christ Club. Etta explained the whole quilting club has been praying for her and wanted to know if Hope needed anything. Hope responded, “Etta, the teen girls have been just wonderful. They've really taken me under their wing, so-to-speak. If you have just a minute, Etta, I want to

share something I've learned from the girls. I want to eventually let all the Quilters for Christ in on.” “Sure, Hope. What's on your heart?”

“Well, Etta, it's just this. For a long long time I just figured most all the teens were COMPLETELY in their own world. They had their own language, with all this cell phone gadgetry and were stone cold to the needs and things of others much older than them. But some things have been happening around here that tell me they are not unreachable at all. Etta, they're not on a different planet unless we've exiled them there by our standing back and stereotyping them as stiff-necked digital zombies.”

By her words to Etta, Hope began painting a different picture of the teens, especially the kitchen table texting girls. With tears Hope, and Ross too, had grown to know a little of the insides of the teens and sort-of adopted them with all their cares and hurts that fill a teen's growing years. Etta learned the unexpected thing was the teens had really adopted them in return. But the two-way adoption was based on giving love; the kind of love that Jesus Christ showed the hurting people around Him.

Then Etta dropped the bomb! It was a short and simple.

“Hope, what would you think if I talked it over with some of the other quilters and see if our church club could begin an Adopt a Teen program? On TV they often want us to adopt a child in a starving country by getting a picture of them and communicating with that child. Well, what you're telling me, Hope, is that the teens here in our own neighborhood are starving just as badly. They are starving for someone to care about them, just as they are. The teens don't want to be around people that will criticize and make judgments about them, until they've walked a mile in the teen's shoes.”

“In fact, Hope, this whole Adopt a Teen thing would even deepen our own gratitude to Christ for having adopted each of us into His church family.” “Etta, can you get ahold of Tom, our youth pastor and see what ideas he has along these lines? I'm sure he's felt pretty alone in trying to reach the youth, with so many of us carrying a scared attitude of the teens, and their so-called different attitude of things.”

It's not hard to get an understanding of the inner loneliness youth have – even in a crowd of their peers. Spend a couple afternoons in any nursing home and visit with the residents that feel so alone and forgotten. They're expected to be satisfied hour after hour with the remote in their hand. Some are given a cold uncaring cell phone.

The real solution has been there since Adam and Eve took their first breath – humans encouraging each other to walk close to our Lord, saturated with tons of heart to heart heavenward communication...

... no batteries required.

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= 9 = Sweeter Tweets

Take the 'ho-hum... yawn' out of your tweets and honor God at the same time. Turn your tweets into sweeter tweets – into games. Here are some ideas:

1. Speed Tweets – have contests to see who can tweet a certain proverb tweet.
2. Scramble Tweets – change a few of the words around.
3. Skip Tweets – replace some of the proverb tweets with blanks.
4. Scavenger Tweets – plug in a tweet and see who can find what chapter it's in.

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= 10 = Another Planet Times 2

“They come from another planet!”

I've read those words on the faces of many of today's parents and church leaders. And I hear the words, “Many of the youth today don't dress, eat, and act the way you and I were brought up to act.” That has also been voiced with frustration by the parents of most every generation, even before Jesus walked this earth.”

“Let's begin with prayer asking God to give all of us here, open humble hearts in the sight of heaven and all that we've been blessed with.” The youth pastor of Ross and Hope's church led a down deep prayer for guidance in reaching a starving generation living within sight of each of us.

The pastor began, “My heartfelt thanks for inviting me to your Quilters for Christ fellowship here today. I compliment all of you on your spirit of outreach to those who will be our leaders in the very near future. Many folks, with much less silver hair than all of you, stretch out their hand toward the horizon and proclaim “it's someone else's job to 'teach them youngin's the error of their ways'”. But you have taken the first and foremost step that pleases the one true God and Creator of all who breath.”

“To make sure we're all on the same page, here, I need someone to define for us, the meaning of the English word 'ALL'. Simple enough - ALL” The pastor wrote the word in large letters at the top of a nearby marker board. Then in the back of the room, Jeanie didn't think the pastor was looking for some complicated answer, so she just blurted out, “Nothin' left out!” Pastor Tim liked the answer and wrote it next to the word ALL.

“I notice most of you have brought your Bibles. I think that's great. That tells me while you've come to partner in making quilts, you also see the need to bring your Bibles with you. I love it! Evidently most of you have noticed the pair of verses that give the reason and scope of Heaven's 'How-To' manual. In 2nd Timothy 3:17 we're promised that scripture thoroughly furnishes us unto All good work. Now 'all good work' would certainly refer to communicating with those who seem to be from another planet. Right?”

With just a hint of a smile, pastor continued. “Now remember what Jeanie said about all? Well, the verse in front of verse 17 tells us what part of scripture is important to us; all scripture; 'Nothin left out'. So then from our God Who cannot lie, we receive direction and a guarantee of harvest for reaching out to others. While there are many promises and directives in scripture, one of my favorites, promises me a harvest if I plant and water the seed properly. It's Psalm 126:6 *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* I call your attention to the words 'doubtless' and the word 'rejoicing'. But the my heart cleaves to the word 'weepeth'.”

“If each of you, in your own heart don't have the proper seed and are willing to plant it with tears of compassion, you should probably stay home till you do.”

“Now, I want to take my few minutes here to tell you about those you think are from another planet. You know - those leaders of our tomorrows – our youth. I'll warn you first. I'm about to make a statement you'll probably find odd. But keep listening to me and the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart. OK. Are you ready? Here goes.”

“Youth today, believe the church leaders and adult attenders are from another planet. (Just as you think they are.) I better repeat that. Youth today, believe the church leaders

and adult attenders are from another planet. You see, they know you won't listen to them and their heartaches because you have already prejudged them; you've prejudged them contrary to the mercy and grace directed in scripture.”

“Now listen carefully. I haven't said that everything youth do today, is OK; far from it. But the big difficulty is they are trying to find their way without any compassionate mature leadership – without YOUR help. They feel like travelers caught in quicksand with no one to even passionately listen to their help cries.”

“Further, youth see churches around them are addicted to presentation and administration technology almost as much as girls are addicted to communication technology and the boys to competition (gaming) technology. To help you see this, ask a teen to give up their hand-held gadgets for a day and see what they say. Their response will be exactly the same as if you tell the church to do without technology for a week – you know, the wireless microphones, music, audio, video systems and all the office computers... etc. etc.”

“Now what REALLY puts the church folks on a different planet, in the minds of youth, is the total absence of messages and lessons that magnify the Bible's guidelines in technology control; both in the church and in the hands of youth and their parents. Youth want adults to understand that while no requirements exist requiring the church to use technology, by contrast youth cannot achieve passing grades in school; even in the elementary grades without DAILY technology use. Do you see the contrast here?”

“All of our technology, is God's gift to us – from our lifesaving heart pacemakers, to page magnifiers for the vision challenged, and GPS when we're lost. But He also gave us scripture to help us honor Him with technology's use. Instead, we've relinquished our discipling role in guiding young hearts and minds, even though scripture commands you and I

otherwise. Am I coming through? A boyscout compass or a satellite GPS system are both God's gifts that were introduced in different generations for the same purpose. But they both need faith in God and His laws to best use them.”

“Now the bottom line to effectively reaching out to youth, is to be able to take all this technology the schools and society have thrown at them and see it in light of the same verses you apply to your quilting efforts. You folks pour many long hours and prayers into your quilts. Those quilt patterns are as varied as the children in our town. Set your hearts and vision, in firm unity, on bringing Jesus' love and warmth to those who maybe don't even know where to look for it, how to obtain it.”

Pastor Tim paused for a few seconds and then spoke. “May I make a few suggestions? One great idea I've already heard a few of you talk about. Your 'Adopt-a-Teen' is a marvelous way to show love while you're learning about the many struggles and stress our youth must deal with, today and their tomorrows. Get to know them. Plant that precious seed in them with patient cultivation. Do you remember the tears in our Psalms verse? Let those youth share their heart with you as you lovingly share Christ's heart with them.”

“I've put two stacks of take-home handouts on the back table. The blue ones give some of the many promises God has for those who reach out to youth. The white ones explain how to begin including Bible verses for using computers, in safe ways that honor God.”

“Oh by the way. Don't let the words Twitter and tweets throw you. Your Bible contains many short statements our youth would call tweets, all ready for you to savor and share. The book of Proverbs is bursting with them all ready for you to show others, how up-to-date our Bible really is.

“Ummm. Wouldn't it be really neat to make a quilt of kids hearts?”

= 11 = A Time Tunnel

As silver-haired parents, listening to me now, you remember those long-ago trips as youngsters to the amusement park, the penny arcade, hall of mirrors, and reading comics about Dick Tracy's futuristic wrist radio. And then a few years later the boat trip with your sweetheart through the tunnel of love. As the youth pastor of our church, and not yet in my thirties, I can't consider any of these as memories, as all of you can," added Pastor Tim.

"But it's crucial that I take just a few more precious minutes of your time to tell you of another tunnel you've been going through, or at least the parents of highschoolers have. Most every day I see these parents with a strong saddening look of bewilderment supported by their almost fearful questions of what they've done wrong, or what had made their teens and preteens so indescribable."

"Actually, there is a term for their attitudes and actions and I believe we can even draw a circle around their manner of living here this evening, again thanks to your Quilters for Christ event today." Tim turned to face the marker board behind him. He wrote plainly, the two words, 'Digital Native'. He again faced his silver-haired listeners and began with, "the term probably looks strange, and I'll begin to explain this way. I need a show of hands. How many of you would likely get a correct answer if you asked a teen or preteen what a chalk and slate are used for?" Only one or two hands went up. "OK. Now how many of you in this room know what an iPad is, and a little how it's used?" Again, only three of the many present, raised their hands.

The reason I ask these two questions is because these two items are largely at the entrance and exit of that tunnel I want to show that you have come through. You've probably

used a chalk and slate, along with McGuffey Readers, listening to the wind-up pendulum clock on the wall tic-toc through the long day, learning your multiplication tables. Your attention in later years was intently focused on growing and guarding a family as you began through that tunnel of focused attention.”

“Progressing through that tunnel you struggled with the expanding attitudes of your children toward profanity, promiscuity, meeting the bills and supervising dating events. That tunnel of attention didn't let you see much of the changes from the chalk and slate, to the blackboard and colored chalk. And then the Greenboard, and of all things, the white marker board – but it doesn't stop there. Still in the tunnel, God's gift of technology gave our white marker board a brain. It's called an Interactive Marker Board. It remembers what you wrote on it; both words and pictures. It's computerized.”

“Well coming out of that tunnel vision of the challenged parent, we are startled by all the gadgetry that sort-of snuck up on us while our children were in class, and we were at work, in the home or business place. The first thing Satan does is to lie to us just as he did in God's garden. We hear these strange words like Twitter, tweets, iPods, and there's that iPad thing again. 'Well, what is it?' You ask.

Very simply, an iPad is a chalk and slate that grew up while you were in that tunnel. An iPad is about the same size as a slate, but has batteries, lights, and a computer inside. It has the ability to communicate somewhat like a telephone can, and even talk to other computers. Is it more dangerous than that chalk and slate? Probably about the same difference as your car in the driveway and your Model T at the other end of the tunnel.”

“Now here's 'where-the-tires-meet-the-road', so to speak. You have to answer the following questions in your own heart, without reservation. Number 1; is Satan more

powerful now than the power God gave him on the other end of the tunnel? I'll repeat my question. is Satan more powerful now than the power God gave him on the other end of the tunnel? Number 2; Does the events of God stopping the sun in Joshua 10 and the backing up of time in 2nd Kings 20, prove He still has control of all that He creates? My third and last question. Does God love your children and mine any less than He did the little boy in a basket in the Egyptian bulrushes? Let's not limit our thinking of what God is able to do."

"Whether God is using bulrushes, blackboards, batteries, or broken hearts, let's stand ready to love and lead His living breathing gifts to us. There's no going back to the leeks, onions, and non-electronic days and ways. We have the unique responsibility of using our experience and storm-tested scriptures to teach God's unfathomable love by our love and understanding. John 3:16 on a handheld slate, still begins on every iPad the world over, 'For God so loved the world, he gave...!'"

= 12 = My Own Red Cross

Their favorite spot in all the world - and they were right in the middle of it on this Saturday. The 14 teen girls all circled around Gram's kitchen table, having already turned off their cell phones and parked them next to Hope's open Bible. There was something almost magic about that table. It seemed to melt all the hearts, young and old, into one heart that fenced out any hurt or hate.

Hardly had Candy Cane finished with her prayer for Hope's continued recovery from her fall, than Hope's silver-haired husband, Ross, entered the kitchen and asked permission to share a couple things. He took a seat so all the

girls could see him and placed a cardboard box containing something on the floor beside him.

“All you young ladies,” he began, “were expected to be OUR students here in this kitchen. And we're thrilled some of that has happened. But you girls have turned the tables on Hope, I mean Gram, and I. These past ten days you've shown us we were wrong. Actually, we were wrong about each of you. I'd better explain. Gram and I had lumped each of you into the bucket of today's youth that seem to be traveling in a cloud, not knowing where your generation were at, and which way to travel. But worse is that so many of us silver-haired folks figured you had no more heart; no more caring for others than those cellphone gadgets there on the table. Well... Hope and I apologize to each of you for judging without knowing you.”

“You got the word out, about Hope's fall, when no one asked you to. But you cared. You cared each day, to bring over get well cards, that Geranium plant, and several meals. Hey guys, I mean girls, you are good cooks. If I was your husband, you'd have me fat in no time,” Ross said with a big grin of admiration. He continued. “Way back before any of you were born and they didn't even have electronic stuff, my mom taught me that when someone does you good, well, ya do 'em back. And quick!”

“My Hope and your Gram decided we wanted to make it clear as crystal that we feel honored God has led each of you to our home.” He stood up and held the box open as Gram gave each one of her girls a rather small box and a peck on the cheek. Gram directed, “Go ahead and open your gifts.”

Each jewelry box was opened with the same oohs and aahs as though each necklace within was a personal rainbow; their own promise to be friends and helpmeets always.

Looking in Ross' direction, Hope said, “OK dad. You skedaddle. The girls and I have work to do.” With his

cardboard box now empty, but a heart bursting with joy, Ross headed for his favorite tilt back chair and a waiting newspaper.

With eye-hugs for each girl, Gram thanked each of them for their show of love. She began with a question, “Let’s say that somehow you knew the fried balogna sandwiches the school cafeteria was going to serve tomorrow, were positively yucky, would you let each other know? If Becker Street was blocked off because of a water pipe break, so you couldn’t get home that way, would you let each other know? Well, sure you would. And I would too. While fried balogna usually isn’t all that dangerous, you and I care enough about each other to send out our warnings. I’m proud of you.”

“Now let’s be honest here. You know even better than I, there are ugly-acting evil people using cellphones and that tweetin’ stuff to take you places you shouldn’t go and hear things that should be flushed. You know that, I’m sure.”

“Well, I want each of you girls to try something next week. In among your other tweets, I want you to tweet a warning to each other and maybe even someone you know that isn’t here today. Here’s the warning, that you can word a little different, if you want to. The warning says, “Hurtful speech is like a mean tweet, once sent, cannot be erased.” Hope added, “the warning is less than 70 characters so that should fit in a tweet, along with a few of your own words.”

Gram handed each girl a pencil and a small piece of paper to write the warning tweet to be sent.

The girls were each careful taking home their necklace gift. It must have been Julia that first tweeted the other kitchen teens with a question, “The gold cross in my necklace has red on all four cross points. Does yours? What gives?”

WOW! What warnings you can tweet to others about their NOW and their ETERNITY.

Can you tweet others about those gifts you’ve received,

to be cherished beyond words?

= 13 = Juggling Plates

Hope's scary illustration began with each of the dozen or so teen girls really focused on how their silver-haired “Gram” would WOW them next. Their kitchen table story teller continued.

The seats on board the airplane were uncomfortable, to say the least. “Jackie. I'll be done with this text message to my stock broker in a minute. Be a help and turn the lights on and silence the GPS for me will ya?” With a questioning look, Jackie followed instructions.

In a seat not far from Jackie, sat Trudy. She had looked forward to visiting her Florida relatives for almost a year. She really expects her visit to the Everglades and Cape Canaveral will be more enjoyable than the last of the stale peanuts she hurriedly pops in her mouth with one hand. With the other hand she slides the boring aircraft magazine into the seatback pouch in front of her. In almost the next breath, she jerks her seatback to the upright position and double-checks that her seat belt is connected, ready for the any-second landing on Runway 12, in this heavy-raining, windy night.

Back up in the cockpit, the bumpy touchdown had made the texting more challenging than expected. Not every pilot can land a jumbo jetliner with one hand and send a text message with the other.” With this, Gram's illustration ended.

Gram explained to her Saturday fellowship girls, “Multitasking finds its way into our lives everyday. Most of the time we find it stressful, while just a few times we'll pride ourselves on how many plates we can juggle in the air at once – so to speak. In my little story, we quickly see two different

people multitasking; the airplane pilot and Trudy in a cramped seat about half way back in the same jumbo jet, with her stale peanuts.”

Hope had her teens pretend each of them were Trudy, as they discussed the importance and dangers of multitasking by the pilot and Trudy. A lively discussion followed that made the bottom line an issue of safety. Juggling peanuts and magazines is not at all to be compared with putting lives at risk trying to do more than one thing at a time in the cockpit of a jumbo jetliner.

To reinforce her point another way, Gram handed a tennis ball to one of the girls and asked her to toss it in the air just a little and catch it. Then do it five times right in a row. One time it was dropped – but quickly retrieved and the toss-catch process continued. The teen was congratulated in how well she did. Gram got another tennis ball from a nearby paper bag and handed it to the same teen who now had a tennis ball in each hand. Instructions were to now do the toss-catch action with both the tennis balls. The process wasn't quite as successful.

But Candy said it was no big deal because tennis balls bounce. You just pick them up and continue. The rest of teens shook their heads in agreement with Candy's comment.

Hope took the tennis balls away from the teen and dropped them in the paper bag. The girls were each startled when Gram pulled a china plate out of the cupboard. She handed it to Martha with the instructions, “OK Martha. Do toss-catch with it. Do it. Toss it up and catch it.” Martha held the plate horizontal and with both hands tossed it up, hardly two inches and then grasp it like it was her lifeline. Martha did it once more, and then breathed a great sigh of relief.

Hope went to the cupboard and pulled out another plate. OK, now Martha. This is multitasking. I hear over and over that teens like to do multitask texting and even get

boastful about it. Here. Do toss-catch with both plates.” Almost in tears, the teen laid both plates on the table and with determination, said, “Gram. You mean so much to me, and I wouldn't dream of putting any of your stuff in danger. Please, please don't make me toss-catch your plates.”

Gram leaned over to the teen and gave one of her big hugs that just melted away hurts and heartaches. “No Martha. I didn't really expect you to juggle my plates.” Gram looked at the other girls and said, “Candy, I need you to help me, but I won't ask you to juggle any plates, OK?” With one hand on her cane, Candy moved slowly toward the center of the group, right in front of Gram. A third plate was retrieved out of the cupboard and placed on the table in line with the other two.

“Candy, I want you to take this dry erase marker and print the names of three of the girls in our group, in the middle of each plate. Each plate will have a girl's name. Ya with me?” Candy felt a little more at ease, knowing she wasn't going to have to do anything dangerous with Gram's china plates. Candy's cane was propped against the edge of the kitchen table and the names were written. The teen, the others all nicknamed, 'Candy Cane' capped the marker then placed it in front of her silver-haired teacher and returned to the back of the group.

“Now girls. You remember Martha wouldn't juggle two of my plates because she thought it was dangerous and she cared about my stuff? Well, that tells me a lot about how much Martha cares about me and my plates too. Now, I want you to stare real close at the three plates with names on them. I want you to pretend that each fragile plate is a person; it's one of you. Think about one of these plates being you and your feelings. None of you want your feelings hurt, or heart broken. And I know you don't want to do that to others. You don't want to break their plate, sort-of. Right?”

“Well, God has given us computers and cell phones that send text messages. He wants us to be super careful when and how we're multitasking. It can be texting or talking. If we're not real careful we can hurt our friends or confuse them with directions and opinions that were not thought out.”

“Now would be a good time for us to pray and in our own hearts ask God to give us good wisdom, with plain old horse sense in using our technology to honor Him and help each other. Do you know that God has made you something of a pilot of the lives and decisions of someone near you. A china plate with their name on it, is held in your hands. The only difference is that your 'china plate' has their name on it. Handle it with great care and prayer.”

= 14 = Jump Texting

Hon, some teen is jumping on our back porch!” was Ross' almost shout at his silver-haired wife sewing at the kitchen table. The needle was parked in the pin cushion and both the Tappins headed for the back door to investigate the commotion. Hope Tappin, (that's 'Hon'), recognized the super-charged teen as one of her every Saturday Fellowship teens,;Bonnie. Hope told her husband of 47 years, the teen's name, as the excited teen was welcomed into the kitchen of Hope.

Realizing there was no real emergency, Ross went into his living room easy chair and half-read newspaper. Hope motioned Bonnie to take a seat at the kitchen table that had seen testings and troubles in teen's lives, sorted out and given their calmed attention. Before Bonnie exploded with excitement, Hope held up both hands in a 'stop' gesture to the

teen. Hope said, “Wow, Bonnie! Anything that's got you this worked up, we'll want to take a serious look at. How's about us starting with prayer asking God to help you to say what's needed and me to listen real close. Let's do that right now.”

Hope knew from the many Saturday teen-girls get-togethers before, that Bonnie was the most burdened of the 14 girls, to use her faith, in this technology world she was thrust into. That world was crammed with school assignments forced her into doing Internet research, her bedroom laptop and printer produced her printed reports, while digital versions of her reports were emailed to her teachers. Most everywhere Bonnie went with her friends, she had to be reachable by Bonnie's mom or dad; for safety sake. The reason given was, “That's what the parents expect, that really truly love and care about their children.”

The biggest reason Bonnie found herself, without a choice of her own, in this world of inescapable tech gadgets, is because all her friends were doing it, whether good or bad.

Because of the long-standing kitchen table rule, the teen turned her cellphone completely off and laid it right next to the ever present, always open Bible. Almost without recognizing it, the girls were all getting used to seeing their tech gadgets right next to God's Word. In their minds were seeds that said without reservation, technology and God's Word go together.

“OK, Bonnie. What's got you all lit up, on the inside and out?”

“Well, Gram, I tried a little texting experiment. What I did, was, I texted all my friends with a question.” The teen's excitement could hardly keep her in her chair explaining to Gram – that's Hope. “I was looking at one of the first proverbs in the Bible that you said we should think of, as tweets. And that we should think about using them in our texting. So I tweeted the question, 'A sentence I read in an old

book talked about wisdom and instruction. Hey everybody, what's the difference?"

“Gram, I got a couple stupid replies, but Hanna, one of my girlfriends, thought it was a good question and asked me what book I saw it in. Honestly, Gram, 'cuz of what you've taught us girls, I first told her the old book was the same one you have us park our cellphones next to; the Bible.”

“It's a miracle, Gram! An absolute; no-question-about-it, miracle! Gram, I'm excited that Hanna wants to learn the difference between instruction and wisdom too. But she's been texting me back with more questions she hopes your Bible has answers for. It's a miracle that even one honest text question can get some teens like me and Hanna looking in God's Word for love, learning, and just knowing someone really truly loves me even though I'm not perfect.”

Bonnie couldn't sit still any longer. She jumped to her feet, pranced around the kitchen table once and knocked Hope's glasses on the floor trying to give her one of those hugs that even make arthritis pains disappear. Trying her very best, Hope tried to calm the teen down just enough to take a look at a couple of things.

Something that probably only heaven knows is the whispered 'Thank you Jesus' repeated over and over from behind a living room newspaper; a newspaper that has no inkling of what real news; real joy; real miracles are all about.

With one loving arm around the teen miracle witness, Hope slid her open Bible closer to them both and asked Bonnie to show her the proverb she had gotten her question from. The next few moments allowed the two ladies from very different generations, to pick out more precious proverbs to get questions out of. You may not have noticed the cellphone in the middle of the table, all alone. Quite a contrast to the focus of teen thinking in all other hours of the day and night.

Do you like miracles? Have you ever truly seen one? How would you like to be in the middle of one? You've just read how... no matter what generation you are a part of.

= 15 = The Right Connection

Ross and his silver-haired wife of 47 years were munching on their 7-layer burritos, that warm Fall afternoon. From their position they could see a couple sailboats casually moving across the blue waters of Pine Lake amid the sparkling diamonds of sun reflections dancing on the water.

A car pulled into the parking lot and a girl got out. She walked over to the swings and sat in one and immediately began pushing buttons on her smart phone. At the same time, a boy got out of the car and walked directly to a picnic table without looking at the girl at all. He had a small earphone in one ear, with the other one just hanging free.

Neither of the teens displayed any interest in the other, as Ross and Hope tried not to give a nosey stare. Shortly, the girl began walking along the sandy shore as the boy returned to the car; taking a seat on the passenger side.

Not long afterward, the girl walked back to a picnic table in the restful shade of a tree whose leaves hadn't begun to display their hidden Fall colors of red, orange, and yellows. With elbows on the table and her face in her hands; eyes covered, Ross and Hope could easily imagine the heart-cries turning into tears of hopelessness.

The boy walked over to the girl but remained standing, with earphone in place. He seemed to say nothing as he appeared cold toward the distraught girl. With hand gestures of desperation toward the boy, communication was exchanged, certain to break anyone's heart who longed for a real friend; someone that deeply cared.

Both teens were clearly connected to their own technology but worlds apart from each other, and the friendship so needed to mature through those stressful uncertain teen years.

As the heart-breaking events played out in front of them, the two silver-haired spectators wrapped up their unfinished burritos, unable to eat them all. Ross lovingly placed his hand on top of Hope's left hand. Their heads both bowed in silent prayer for the teens in front of them and those that God has brought into their mission field.

As Ross and Hope prayed, their clasped hands came to rest on the car Bible always on the seat between them. It was then the only real life connection was made, between two hearts and Heaven's plan for every age.

Making the RIGHT connection, of lasting love,
understanding, peace, and purpose, rests squarely
and solely on, and in, God's precious word;
His heart-to-heart communication
that meets every need.

A shepherd boy that became a man after God's own heart wrote the following Psalm about His Lord that has brought peace and truth to broken hearts, and stressed lives over the years – Psalm 23:

1 ¶ «A Psalm of David.» The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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