

The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk

What is the fear of the Lord?

ROBERT KEY

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”

– Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (NKJV)

I have long been a fan of summary passages such as this. However, when so much is compacted into a succinct statement, it is necessary to consider carefully its meaning. At this time I would like us to focus on the phrase, “**fear the LORD**.”

Hebrew has several words for “**fear**,” but the particular word for **fear** used here, “*yārē*” (יָרֵא), can have five different meanings when it is used in the expression, “**fear the LORD**.”

1. The emotion or feeling of fear: When the people were afraid of the presence of the LORD on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:9ff, 20:18-20; Deuteronomy 5:4-5.) they had been commanded to come near and hear God’s voice. Therefore, God was not going to strike them dead. Yet they felt afraid and would not go near. This is also seen in Isaiah 8:12-13 where “*yārē*” is used in the context of two other words which specify “**terror**.”

2. The intellectual anticipation of evil (whether or not accompanied by the feeling of fear): In Genesis 31:31 Jacob said that he sneaked away from Laban to return to Canaan because he was **afraid** that Laban would not let his daughters go. He anticipated Laban’s ruthless ways.

3. Reverence and awe (to hold in great respect, to hold a deep love for): Leviticus 19:3 tells us to fear (reverence) our parents. I don’t know about you, but my mother and father are not that scary. However, they are worthy of respect and love. I consider that the things

they say and the values they hold are to be highly esteemed. If I respect someone, I want to be like them in some manner.

4. **Righteous behavior:** Leviticus 19:14 says, “*You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall **fear** your God...*” (See also Leviticus 25:17, 2 Kings 17:34 and Deuteronomy 17:19)
5. **Formal religious worship:** In 2 Kings 17:24-41 the Assyrians had displaced the northern tribes and brought in people from other nations, and God had judged them. The King of Assyria then sent a priest to teach the people the rituals of Jehovah worship (vs. 27). The priest came and taught them how they should **fear the LORD** (vs. 28). They all did this (vs. 32); however, in vs. 33-34 we see they “**feared the LORD**” (ritually – meaning #5) but they “*did not fear the LORD*” (in obedience – meaning #4). The ritualistic meaning is also seen in Deuteronomy 14:22-23, and Joshua 22:25.



Moses and the Burning Bush by Arnold Friberg, 1999

So what does “**fear the Lord**” mean in our text? All of these!

We are to:

1. Be afraid of the wrath of God.
2. Anticipate God’s judgment or the loss of His blessing if we are not obedient.
3. Honor, respect, and love the Lord.
4. Behave properly. Do what is right.
5. Worship Him the way He prescribes.

For additional information, see Strongs #3372 and Theological Word Book of the Old Testament, Moody Press 1980 s.v. #907

MAY 2018

- 5** Church Work Day, 8 am. Rain Day 5/12
- 6** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching: Psalm 29
- 6-12** Mansfield Christian School uses GFC auditorium, 3:30-9 pm
- 12** Women of Grace continue Armor of God study, session 3, 10:15 am-1:00 pm
- 13** Elder Jon Vega preaching Psalm 104 (Mother's Day). Communion. 
- 20** Elder Rick Widener preaching: Psalm 22
- 26** Women of Grace complete study on the Armor of God. 10:15 am - 1:00 pm
- 28** Elder Jadae Fox preaching: Ps. 47 (Ascension Day). Communion. 

Here's how it happened! *(concluded)*

clicked on an internet ad for a publishing company, not knowing it was a self-publishing firm. I did not want to self-publish, mainly because it's expensive and also because I'd heard of too many authors who wind up with boxes of books in the basement. Periodically, this company would call me and I would tell them I was not interested.

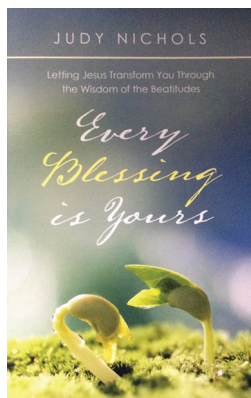
Last July they called again and, thanks to Caller ID, I did not even answer. They called several more times and finally sent me an email asking if I wanted them not to call any more. I wrote an honest reply about my situation and told him I would think about self-publishing and let him know if I was interested.

Ten minutes after I sent the email, the phone rang. The salesman was very nice and a very good salesman. He explained everything in great detail, most of which I did not fully absorb because I was sitting on the porch swing cleaning raspberries. But I took the plunge, gulped, and signed on.

The actual process of publishing was very streamlined. These companies know what they're doing. I had to sign papers, pay money of course, and put everything I wanted between the covers of my book into one giant Word document and send it in. They sent me proofs of my cover and book interior to proofread, correct, and approve. When all was done to my satisfaction, it went to press.

The dream has become reality. I have boxes of books which I hope my children will not have to dispose of when I am gone. Who knows? Maybe then would be the time God uses them the most.

Here's how it happened!



JUDY NICHOLS

When Bill Deckard first asked me to write for the Yellow Deli's little magazine, *Salt & Light*, I never dreamed I would wind up writing a book, but as the years passed and I continued to write (and people seemed to like what I wrote), a little dream began to take shape. I struggled with several things, though.

First, I didn't want to write a book for the wrong motives. The positive strokes to my ego were quite gratifying but I knew that feeding my flesh was no good reason to write a book. Second, I knew I couldn't be in it for the money. You don't make money from writing a book unless you are a celebrity or your work hits the best seller list.

Third, I have never been a salesman, Trying to get a publisher to accept my book was a really scary prospect. And finally, I had no idea what to write about or what kind of format my book should take. What it all finally came down to was, "Lord, I only want to write a book if it is something You can use to bless your people."

And so I waited. And waited, and waited some more. One year my little ladies' cell group went through Beth Moore's book, *Breaking Free* which draws heavily from Isaiah 61. I fell in love with that chapter and wrote fifteen devotional pieces from it. Some years later, I went through the sixteen week Formational Prayer program, first as a participant and then several more times as a co-leader, which further developed my understanding of Isaiah 61.

Several more years after that, I decided to study the book of Matthew in my personal devotional time. When I studied the Beatitudes, I realized they share many of the same themes as Isaiah 61 and follow the same kind of progression. My dream began to become reality.

It took me a year to write the book. I spent another year writing the book proposal to send to publishers. I approached several publishers, all of whom said it was good but either too short to be feasible (i.e. it couldn't be priced high enough to offset the cost of publishing it) or for other reasons peculiar to the company, they couldn't do it right then. I spent another year expanding the book, nearly doubling it in length but, again, the publishers couldn't take it for internal reasons.

As my life circumstances began to change in those years, I just didn't feel I had what it takes to continue pursuing publication so I just let it lie. Years prior I had *(concluded in previous column)*

Discoveries in Mexico

GRACE FEIA

Ed's Note: *I asked Grace if I could share the letter she wrote about her recent time in Mexico. (She is the daughter of Tom and Beth Feia.) I was touched by what she learned about the Lord and herself. She hopes to return to Mexico soon.*



I am back from Mexico after two months of serving at The Misión Para Niños...My time at the mission has been a beautiful and joyful experience. I have learned more about myself than I could have anywhere else. The “children,” ages 15-48, have taught me about love and kindness. They showed me how blessed I am and how special life can be. Serving them was truly meaningful to me and to them. I know I have been a blessing to them, but, as it often goes with missions, they have also been a blessing to me and God has worked in my life. Here is something I wrote about a month ago about my experience and what God has done in my life through the mission.

“I packed my bags and came to Mexico not knowing what to expect. I left behind my school, my friends, my car, my house. I left behind the things I once held dear and thought were so important. I left my comfort zone but I have found comfort in the Lord. I never thought I’d be where I am now but the presence of God has gone with me and given me rest.”
“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall hold me.”

This journey has had its ups and downs. I have found myself wondering what my purpose here is and what my next steps will be. I ask the Lord for wisdom and knowledge and to lead me forth in the right way. *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”* Some days I am weak. I fall short. I’m so far from perfect. I mess up, sin, and doubt, but the perfect God is so patient with me. He knows every move I make and He still loves me. There’s no catch. He doesn’t say, *“I love you IF...”* He just loves me. He keeps me as the apple of His eye. *“As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so the Lord alone led him.”*

The Lord called me to Mexico, La Misión para Niños. The Lord taught me how to love in ways I could have never learned in Ohio. He showed me that there is joy through Him in broken places and broken people. The Lord had given me fifteen human beings to care for and fifteen human beings to teach me about life. *“In this place I will give peace,”* says the Lord of hosts. I am no longer afraid of what my future holds. I have learned to forgive those who have hurt me in the past and those who will in the future. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new,”* I find comfort in the Lord. I know that wherever I go and whoever I meet, I can show God’s love. It is so consistent when things of this world

are not. He never fails.

I have found how amazing it can be to simply say “yes” to God. The Lord has called me to be a missionary. He has called me to use my past and my struggles for good. He has heard my prayers, seen my tears, and healed me. He will do the same for you. *“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”*

Some days were hard. We woke up at 6:30 every day, ate breakfast at 7:00 and then we woke the kids. We changed their night diapers, showered them, and got them ready for the day. We fed some of them every meal since they could not feed themselves. Lifting them in and out of their wheelchairs was sometimes a challenge, but the Lord gave me strength every day.

The work we did was very “hands on” including medications for seizures, enemas and foot fungus treatments. It was exhausting at times, but it was also a very honoring thing. I also got sick while at the orphanage. I was scared, but it taught me that God is absolutely in control of everything. All I could do was trust in Him and His perfect plan.

I hope to go back to Mexico soon because my time there is far from over. I feel the Lord is working through me and calling me into missions to spread His love with not only the orphanage in Mexico but with college students like me. I shared at my Delta Gamma sorority event about my time in Mexico, and it had an impact on the girls. They were moved. I plan to do more sharing to raise awareness of God’s love working through people in my generation. Thank you for following me on this journey. It means a lot to know that people are supporting me and praying for me.

Love, Grace

A new name

DONNA KURTZ with RICK WIDENER

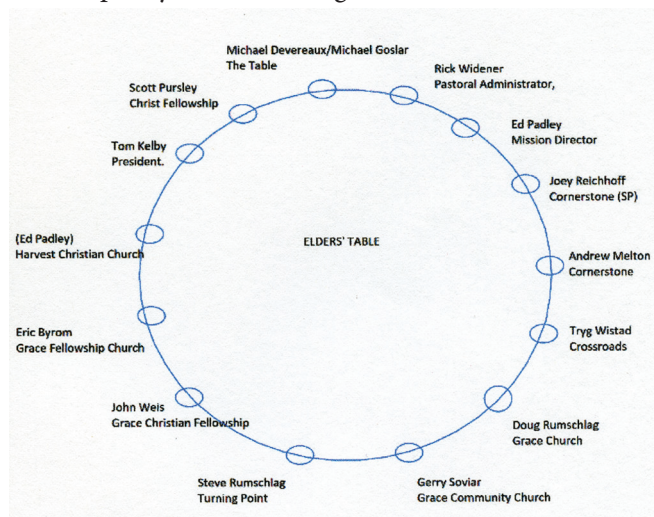
A new name is significant. Those of us who attended the recent conference at Grace Church, Toledo, found out we were no longer at an Alliance for Renewal Churches conference, but we were attending a “Table Fellowship” conference. At the first session on Friday morning, Tom Kelby gave us some of the reasons for the change.



Tom Kelby introducing attendees to the “new” Table Fellowship

He started out by saying that the ARC title did not communicate well outside of the United States. Organizations frequently change their names to communicate better, e.g. “Campus Crusade” is now simply “Cru.” There are also other groups with similar names like the Alliance of Renewal Churches.

The choice of “Table” suggests closeness, conversation, the Lord’s Table. Now there is a Board of Directors (Elders’ Table) to reflect each of our churches. Each church has a place at the Elders’ Table. The senior pastor/elder represents his church at Table. (The local eldership may decide to assign this role to another elder.



Graphic used to illustrate the various Table Fellowship leaders

Non-senior elders will be asked, if possible, for continuity and efficiency, to serve for a minimum of five years. Tom Kelby and Rick Widener will serve as president and pastoral administrator respectively and have a seat at the Elders’ Table. So that our missionaries can have a voice, Ed Padley will serve as Missions Director, also with a seat at the Elders’ Table. The Elders’ Table will choose a secretary and treasurer from their number.

Along with churches and missions, Table Fellowship will have a category called Associates for other individuals who are like-minded and want a formal relationship with us.

There is also a final category, Friends. These are churches or leaders who are not members of Table Fellowship but because of respect, history and relationship, we continue to build with them in some loose way. Eric Meyer of Tampa is an example of this designation.

The new internet name for Table Fellowship is thetablefellowship.org. This was chosen because tablefellowship.org without the “the” would have cost \$4000 to \$6000!

Be watching for the conference messages online at thetablefellowship.org. They are on Genesis 1-4 and are definitely important to our vision of wanting our churches, missionaries and associates to be “Biblically healthy!”



How could we have missed this one?! Joanna Irene Weaver, daughter of Jon and Allison Weaver—and Pat Weaver’s granddaughter—now 3 months old.

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(The complete list of church functionaries will return next month)