

Word of Witness

I was brought up in a fundamentalist Christian home. There were negative things about that but also very positive things. One of those is that we read our Bibles and memorized a lot of Scripture.

Adolescence was very difficult for me. But there were two verses that were a great help to me: Proverbs 3:5 and 6:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your paths.

Years later I look back in amazement at how God did direct my paths.

After high school, there was no money for college so I went to work. During that year, my 95-year-old grandfather died and left me enough money for four years of college. After college, instead of going into teaching as I had planned, I went to work for a Christian youth organization and later into social work. That path led me to therapy which helped my life enormously.

I had been working in Washington State for seven years and felt it was time for a change. I thought about San Diego, Denver and Washington, D.C. I had one friend in Washington D.C. who urged me to come there so I packed up my Volkswagen Beetle and drove across the country.

I had been a Presbyterian for about 15 years but in Washington my friend went to a United Methodist Church so that's where I went. There I learned meditation which has been a great help to my spiritual life. I met the love of my life and the career I continued until my retirement. I worked in legislative action for the United Methodist Women's Division.

Eventually my path took me to New York to continue working for the Women's Division, to Leonia to live and, finally, to this wonderful church. And here I see God in each of you as you reach out and care for each other. As you care for the hungry and the homeless, for abused women (for 30 years as Pete Shanno told us last Sunday), as you teach our children, work with Guatemalan workers and teach students learning English. I see and hear God in Debra and in her sermons. I see and hear God in Renee and the choir and the music we sing together.

There is a hymn I want sung at my funeral. I'm sure it speaks for many of us. The chorus goes:

Great is your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness.

Morning by morning new mercies I see.

All I have needed, your hand has provided.

Great is your faithfulness, Lord unto me...unto all of us!

Joyce Hamlin

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