

METEOR SHOWERS & MEMORY

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I sat staring at the red button on the instrument panel, my heart pounding. Soon I would be instructed to push it, but to push it too early or too late could endanger the lives of four people, and being one of those four made me especially nervous.

When Terry and I were taking a break from life and spending the day at Disney World, we went on a great ride. "Great" is my definition, "the ride from Hades" would be Terry's. It was a space simulator, where we were strapped into a "pod" with two strangers and each given a task to ensure a safe trip to the Red Planet.

Our first suspicion that this wasn't like riding the boat through "It's A Small World" was the numerous signs posted every few feet along the three miles we waited in line warning us that, should we suffer from heart problems/pregnancy/asthma/ kidney stones/hunger, or stomach acid we SHOULD NOT take this ride. Our second cause to wonder came too late, when, as we sat waiting for takeoff we noticed stashes of barf bags by each seat. As they sealed us into that tiny space and the dashboard slid close against our face, I thought how Terry was going to need one before we even took off. I found it interesting that I, who have suffered from claustrophobia all my life, loved it and Terry, who hasn't, got a HUGE case of it then and there.

We did manage to safely dodge meteor showers, survive acid rain, land on Mars, and execute our specified tasks without bringing about long and torturous deaths for everyone, but Terry has never been the same. He no longer regrets his lost childhood dream of being the first man on the moon.

This ride started me thinking. Everything about this ride mimicked reality. Our senses told us this *was* reality, from seeing our environment, feeling the liftoff and meteors hitting us, and hearing the sounds of this simulated experience. **But our senses can be fooled, just look at reading a book or watching a movie.** Yet our heads had the knowledge that it was merely a ride. How? Because of what Terry refers to as "accumulated learning," or memory. I've always assumed that we know reality by experiencing it through our senses. But, while everything about our body told us this was reality, we knew it wasn't. It was "pretend." A great pretend,

granted, but still, it was pretend.

My mother-in-law, Peg, has Alzheimer's Disease. She has no memory other than from the far past, if that. If she had been on this ride she would have believed that it was reality. She has no context for life. I realized that day that reality is the present, **plus** memory. Our memory told us that this was a ride at a theme park and that, in "real" life, Terry and I were not actually co-astronauts.

Memory, obviously, can be positive or negative, and while we all have experienced both, **most of the time it is within our ability to choose what we remember.** I love reliving good times and I avoid dwelling on bad ones. Often memories come to mind unsolicited, but we still have the ability to choose whether to go with them or to block them and move on to something else. Recently I was cooking in my mother's kitchen and suddenly my mind jumped back to another time in that same kitchen. A nephew came running from the basement to tell us that he thought Chris had broken his leg. Soon after that, as I ran upstairs to call 911, I'd cried out "God! I can't do this again!" (This was his third time breaking that same femur, the hardest bone in your body to break.) We'd had to move the beds so the paramedics could get the stretcher in ... "No," I said to myself, "I'm not going there." And I mentally made the effort to think about something else. Those memories are too painful, I don't choose to relive them. Moreover, I have that choice. As they say, "You can't stop the bird from flying over your head but you can keep it from building a nest in your hair." They're actually talking about temptation, but it works here too.

Have you ever noticed how much God loves us to remember all the good things He has done for us? And not only does He want us to remember but He's really into having feasts and celebrations for them. Look at how many Jewish Feasts He set up to remember His mighty acts, and how many times people built an altar to the Lord after He'd done something great. In Joshua 4, after God had supernaturally parted the waters of the Jordan, he had Joshua choose twelve men (one from each tribe) to pick up rocks from the bottom of the Jordan and use them to build an altar. Joshua told them "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. ... These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." (Joshua 4:6,7) The reason we have communion is because Jesus asks us to remember. **God wants us to celebrate the memories of His provision and care.**

On August 8, 1998, Terry and I attended a meeting to hear a guest speaker. In the middle of his teaching he suddenly stopped, pointed at Terry, and said, "The gentleman there in the third row laughing with the glasses, come on up here." He then spoke things from God over Terry that were phenomenal, things about money, anointing, healing, and teaching. That day changed our expectations of what God was doing and going to do in our lives. Since then, that date, August 8, has become our "Day of Remembrance."

About a month before each eighth of August I start looking back through my journal. I make notes of the events and things that God has done in our lives over the last year, both large and small. I print it out, and on our Day of Remembrance we read over the timeline as we eat out and talk about God's provision. It covers everything from dreams to special events to buying a new car. This year included a funny story from Christmas and a trip to the zoo with our friends. One entry was how God warned us about a situation that was coming up, telling me ""Let My consolation bring joy to your soul." (Psalm 94:19)

Another entry read: "Took a 'Mental health Day' today and went to Richmond, Indiana to Tom Raper's RV place and looked at RVs." Our list of events includes everything from spiritual insights to things that have happened with the business. One year even included a dream our attorney had where he found us the money we needed. One was "Today I found out I'm going to be a grandmother." And there was the Friday Terry had until noon to get the money he needed to fly to California for a demo, or have to cancel the appointment. It was an incredible opportunity and would be a crushing blow to have to cancel it. We'd pulled every string we could but to no avail. At 11:55 a.m. the phone rang, and it was someone we would have never expected to call. They had been thinking about us and wanted to know if we needed money, arranging for us to come pick some up the next morning.

Here are some other examples:

- Revelation on God's checking account and freedom
- Terry's dream of the angel named Strength.
- God spoke to us today through the words on the Jim Barna semi truck: "The Adventure Starts Here." Soon afterwards we nearly stepped on a large snake and then drove through a tornado. God is stepping up the adventure. :)
- God had someone anonymously fix our car
- God woke Terry 3 times the night before Election Day to "Pray for Obama's safety"

- Junk email today from *Diamond Financial Services*. God is telling us that He has our finances under control and don't worry about them.
- Revelation: anger and disgust over other's sin is being self-righteous
- Discouraged, every door on this trip has shut. What are You saying God?
- God spoke to Terry today telling him he's asking the wrong questions.

Life is not a series of haphazard events, God gave us a memory for a purpose, and He loves for us to remember His thoughtfulness and love. We have a tendency to focus on the big events that God does, but the daily, less dramatic things He does are also important.

Good memories bring stress relief and a warmth to our hearts, making us kinder, softer, and happier. Reliving good memories actually causes our brains to produce "happy" chemicals, thereby making us feel happier.

Our Day of Remembrance is a celebration of God's goodness in our lives. It shows us that we are walking on His path, and we can see how He is orchestrating each step. **It reminds us that we're not just wondering randomly through life.** It brings confidence, gratitude, joy, excitement, and allows us to see the adventure. We are always amazed at His provision, victories, and the miracles He has performed for us. It's a wonderful time of remembering, and we come away from there with a renewed excitement over God's destiny for us, and how He supernaturally moves in our lives. God loves us to acknowledge His goodness, and what a waste of awesome testimonies if we don't remember! The book of Revelation tells us that one way satan is overcome is by our testimony. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony ... (12:11)*

I suggest that you, too, set aside a special time to celebrate God's presence in your life and to remember His provision and goodness. This means jotting notes throughout the year of what He's done so you CAN remember. Make sure you are watching for and expecting Him to be totally involved in everything you do, even if it's dodging meteor showers on a ride at Disney World. You'll be amazed at what you see.