

THE AMBER PATH

January 2011

Brenda Cobb Murphy - brenda@brendacobbmurphy.com

As I write this I'm sitting at Starbucks. My tummy is full of Very Berry Coffeecake and a hazelnut latte, my soul is enjoying Cat Stevens singing from the speaker over my head, and my spirit is laughing at Jesus. For three days I've had a line from a song stuck in my head and it's been driving me crazy. This morning as I was blow-drying my hair there it was again. I don't even know how I know this song. As I started to make a concentrated effort to erase the song from my mind I suddenly heard it differently, it was Jesus singing to me! "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me." I laughed out loud, delighted, because it's not just reminding me that He loves me, which is great, but it has personal meaning to just the two of us. He knows I love the verses from Song of Songs (2:3,5) that read:

³ *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest
is my beloved among the young men.*

*I delight to sit in his shade,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste. ...*

⁵ *Strengthen me with raisins,
refresh me with apples,
for I am faint with love.*

This particular line from this particular song today (and the last three days) has been for me and me alone. He didn't think to Himself, "Hmm, I wanted to sing this song for Little Bo Peep but she wasn't listening, so I'll just give it warmed over to Brenda. No, it was especially for me.

Recently I drove to Georgia to meet my internet friend, Terri, and we had a wonderful time. She had bought my book over the internet and written me, and we'd been emailing for a few months. Enjoying the six hours I had to think on the drive to Atlanta there was one point where a song from Disney's *Jungle Book* ran through my head, where the monkey is singing "I wanna walk like you, talk like you too!" I said, "It's about you Jesus!"

In thinking about walking and talking like Jesus I had an epiphany. In being created I've drawn a slip with my name on it and a map, the Brenda Murphy map, and it's only for me. It's a treasure map in that at the end Jesus is waiting for me with

open arms, but that's not all it is. Each step is its own adventure as I place my foot into that warm and inviting amber light. Each of us have our custom-made path, beautiful and adventurous and full of life, and no one can walk that particular path except who it was made for.

Earlier on the trip I had been thinking about Mother Teresa and her compassion, and how I should be more like her, but now I realized that I don't want Mother Theresa's compassion, I want the heart for others that God created me to have. Never mind the ministry of the "biggie" I admire, God has my own ministry laid out for me alone. Forget wanting to write like Joan Anderson and Twyla Tharp, I want to write like Brenda Murphy! I want to be who He created Brenda Murphy to be, to live the Adventure He specifically has for me. I need to stop wishing I could do or be like someone else, my path is awesome if I'll choose to walk it.

Placing my foot may be glorious, painful, sad, joyful, or discouraging, but the emotions of every step, whatever they are, glow with the adventure that is Jesus. When I'm walking on my path with Holy Spirit it's all good, no part of my path is lacking, because no matter what I walk through He is with me, laughing, comforting, holding me, and reminding me that He loves me.

Recently I was asked a question that intrigued me, and I've put a lot of thought into what my answer would be. This person wanted to know how they could keep focused on God. After mulling on it for a few weeks I made a list of the things that have impacted me in my daily walk, changing my life and making my path glow with the joyful Adventure.

- I look for God's voice in everything around me. He's constantly speaking, I just have to learn to listen. There is no limit to how God will speak to us, we just have to develop a mindset that can hear Him. God is so desperate to communicate with us that He'll use anything. He has spoken to Terry and me using everything from a washing machine ad at Best Buy ("Forward thinking") to a billboard ("It's not a resolution, it's a lifestyle") to the Burger King logo ("The king wants to play"). He has used a Nestles Quick bottle ("I'm giving you a new name"), a fish-shaped mailbox ("I'm sending you money in the mail"), and a greeting card ("I'm in love with you!").
- I listen for God in my night-dreams and I find He'll show me things coming up, give direction, and provide insight into my life. At a point when Terry and I were struggling through some frustrating circumstances I dreamed that

there were snakes in our house, but Terry had on boots and with one stomp the snakes would crumble into pieces. God reminded us that we have the authority to change our circumstances.

- Everything in life is prophetic, as in, it is God speaking to us. The physical represents the spiritual. So look at events in your life and ask what God is trying to say. When, over a period of two weeks, I lost the same pair of earrings three different times, finding them each time (I've never lost earrings that I can remember) I asked God what He was trying to say, and He told me, "You've stopped listening." When our rear-view mirror fell off the windshield and forty-five minutes later our son told us that his rear-view mirror had fallen off, we knew God was reminding us of what He'd told us two weeks before, "Don't look back."
- I hang out with God and talk. I treat Him like a true friend, chatting and listening for Him to talk back. We joke and laugh and goof off, like friends do. Because I make time for Him to be a part of my life He'll come hang out.
- I actually BELIEVE that I'm hearing God and accept it as Him, knowing that I might mistakenly think something is Him that is just me, but it doesn't matter. If out of my love for Him I make a mistake, He loves me enough to overlook it. Practice is the only way to learn, and He'd rather I risk a mistake and learn to hear Him than to be so safe I never hear Him say anything.
- I am emotionally involved in God. Love is an emotion. God is an emotional God and He created emotions in us. Love is a heart thing, not a head thing. He showers me with His love, just like he does you, but you have to nurture the mindset to see it and receive it. He gives me gifts, He whispers words of love to me, and He makes me laugh. He treats me like a lady.
- I understand that prayer is continual communion between God and me, not limited to something formal that must be done aloud or in a certain posture. He hears my prayers by intimately knowing my heart. When my heart hurts it's "praying" (crying out) without me even realizing it. When I'm joyful I'm "thanksgiving" whether I form the words or not. When I have a need he knows it before I ask, because He knows me. Prayer is rarely a formal request, nor is it constantly re-stating problems to Him, it is letting Him be the answer.
- I believe that we're to have a relationship with God first, and that only out of that intimacy do we have anything other than ourselves to give the world around us. Neither is exclusive or linear, but out of my time with Him I'm filled with His heart and what He wants me to do and say.

- I expect God to perform miracles, therefore I see them and live them. I refuse to create my doctrine to match my experience. While many miracles are physically impossible and I've seen them, they don't have to be. Many times miracles come in how God is using something to speak to us. The timing and the impact it has on us is miraculous.
- I walk in the supernatural. I believe that God is a spiritual God and that we walk with Him in the spiritual realm, which makes it supernatural. Therefore, my expectation is that He will do supernatural things. For example, recently when He was speaking to us about satan trying to close doors in our lives, Terry and I were watching TV when upstairs a door suddenly slammed shut. When I tried to slam it myself it wouldn't, the cushion of air kept it from barely touching the doorjamb, much less actually closing. Terry and I began speaking "open doors" over our lives. Soon after that our kids were at the office working when suddenly all three of them heard a door open. The sound came from a place where there was no door, and we knew that God was telling us that He is opening doors for us.
- Holy Spirit plays a huge part in my life, as He teaches and guides me. We cannot fathom the importance He has in our lives, from enabling us to walk supernaturally to being the key to our relationship with our Bridegroom Jesus. If you begin to listen for Him he'll teach you all sorts of fascinating things, and show you how to move in the spiritual realm.
- I trust Jesus to love me for who I am and I know that He cares more about my heart than my actions, so I can let down my hair and just be real, not expecting Him to fall on me in judgment. I have learned that my heart for Him matters more than anything else.

Each one of us has an amber path, individually and carefully laid out by God. It doesn't take work to walk it; you don't have to go off and be in some big ministry or quit your job. You can still watch Survivor and go to Starbucks. It's nothing more than walking it with Holy Spirit, learning to listen and respond, and falling deeper in love with Jesus. As long as He has your heart and you want to know Him better, then Holy Spirit will be walking with you along your amber path, filling every step with His joyful Adventure.