Devotional Thoughts :: Keep A Quiet Heart - Elisabeth Elliot

Keep A Quiet Heart

As a little girl I especially loved the story of God's call to the child Samuel as he lay sleeping in the temple. I wondered if God would ever call me. Would I hear Him? What would He say? Throughout my growing years I read missionary stories and heard them told at our dinner table by guests from many lands who came to stay with us. I was always eager to know just how they were called. As a college student I worried much about whether I would fail to follow the Shepherd, would be deaf to His call. I thought it such a bewildering matter.

It is not a worry anymore. Experience has taught me that the Shepherd is far more willing to show His sheep the path than the sheep are to follow. He is endlessly merciful, patient, tender, and loving. If we, His stupid and wayward sheep, really want to be led, we will without fail be led. Of that I am sure.

When we need help, we wish we knew somebody who is wise enough to tell us what to do, reachable when we need him, and even able to help us. God is. Omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent—everything we need. The issue is confidence in the Shepherd Himself, a confidence so complete that we offer ourselves without any reservation whatsoever and detemine to do what He says.

What He says? But how shall I know that?

He calls us every day, "o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea." He comes to us in the little things, in the ordinary duties which our place in life entails. When I was a child He called me. The duty which my place in life entailed was obedience to my father and mother. In school and Sunday School He called me through the teacher. What she said I knew I was supposed to do. In first grade (yes, in public school) we sang the hymn, "Father, We Thank Thee." The second stanza says, "Help us to do the things we should, to be to others kind and good, in all we do at work or play to grow more loving every day." God's call again.

It's alluring to think of our own situation as very complex and ourselves as deep and complicated, so that we waste a good deal of time puzzling over "the will of God." Frequently our conscience has the answer.

My friend Jim O'Donnell tells how he, a hard-headed, hard-hearted man of the world, found Christ. His conscience was awakened. The call of God was immediate: "Go home and love your wife." The change was so sudden and so radical, Lizzie could not make head or tail of what had come over him. This self-confident and self-interested man had quit living for himself. He had died. An altogether new kind of life was now his. The first difference it made was the difference that mattered most—in his private life. It was there that he began to obey.

We are not talking here about audible voices. Although people in Bible times often heard God speak, we can expect that He will usually speak today through conscience, through the written Word, through other people, and through events. Events themselves, the seemingly insignificant happenings of every day, reveal the will of God. They are the will of God for us, for while we live, move, and have our being here on earth, in this place, this family, this house, this job, we live, move, and have our being in God. He "pulls strings through circumstances," as Jim Elliot said, even the bad circumstances (see Genesis 45:8, 50:20).

Three questions may help to clarify the call of God. Have I made up my mind to do what He says, no matter what the cost? Am I faithfully reading His Word and praying? Am I obedient in what I know today of His will?

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul" (Psalm 143:8, NIV).
I have really enjoyed E.Elliot's books and "Keep a Quiet Heart" is one of my favorites. A few months ago I posted this from her book also:


Keeping a quiet heart has everything to do with trust. Something I continue to work on.

"A quiet heart is content with what God gives. It is enough."

In Him, Chanin

Amen Chanin,

This quote from the article really spoke to me:

Quote:
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Isn't a wonderful truth that God is wanting to lead us more then we want to follow. :-)