



CrossConnect
MINISTRIES

SET FREE AND STANDING TALL

LUKE 13:10-17

JACKIE OESCH

“I have stored up Your Word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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Set Free and Standing Tall is designed for personal or group study. The material can be adapted for men's ministries, women's ministries, or youth ministries. The material is divided into

Valued Moments that are intended to:

- Encourage reflection on specifically chosen Bible verses,
- Stimulate thought regarding the application of God's Word to your own personal life, and
- Challenge each individual to share the message that all people are worth *full value through JESUS*.

Each of the **Valued Moments** is considered only a part of the whole. No one segment is designed to be a complete study. The English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible is the translation used throughout this study.

Each of the weekly lessons addresses different teachings from Luke 13:10-17.

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Lesson 1: Crippled

- To learn the facts of the story
- To identify the crippled in my life
- To recognize my own crippled condition
- To journal my thoughts and feelings as they relate to the lesson

Lesson 2: Called

- To recognize the value and power of a name
- To choose to honor the use of another's name
- To believe that Jesus knows my name and calls me forward

Lesson 3: Forgiven

- To acknowledge the root problem of the human condition and its consequences
- To experience the freedom of confession
- To bring those burdened and in bondage before the Lord to hear the words, "You are set free."

Lesson 4: Touched

- To recognize those areas of my life that need healing
- To experience God's healing touch
- To understand that the Lord wants His children released to live the abundant life
- To discover ways in which I can be used by God to touch the lives of others

Lesson 5: Worshiped

- To recognize that all of life is worship
- To experience worship as a response to God's healing touch
- To understand that my life of worship becomes a safe place for others

Lesson 6: Restricted

- To discover how to live my life as one who has been set free
- To identify inhibitors that restrict me from living my life set free
- To release, encourage, and empower others to live lives free and forgiven

Lesson 7: Valued

- To believe that when the Father looks at me through Jesus He declares that I am worth full value to Him
- To know that Jesus will be my advocate in all areas of my life
- To choose to use my key chain as a tool for connecting others to Jesus

Six parts – One for each day of the week except study group day

- **Introduction** – Looking at the Word with questions (Exploring)
 - ✓ What God says? God is speaking.

- **Digging Deeper** – Asking more questions (Inquiring)
 - ✓ What more is God saying?

- **Reflecting on the Word** (Listening)
 - ✓ Making it personal, relevant for today

- **Journaling** (Articulating thoughts and reflections)
 - ✓ What's going on inside of me?
 - ✓ Where is my heart touched or troubled?

- **Prayer** (Lord, let's talk about this...)
 - ✓ Sharing my thoughts, feelings, concerns with the Lord

- **My Daily Pick-Up** (Reaching out)
 - ✓ We cannot help but speak of the things we have seen and heard – Acts 4:20
 - ✓ Action response – thinking and acting beyond myself
 - ✓ Encouragement

VALUED MOMENT #1

CRIPPLED

THE WORD

Now He [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.
And there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years.
She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. (Luke 13:10-11).

Consider each phrase of these verses and list the facts. List your discoveries, observations, and insights:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Now, retell the story in your own 21st Century words:

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STORY

1. What was the significance of the setting? _____

2. Who are the characters? _____
3. What is the problem? _____

Valued Moment #1: *Crippled*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do I find myself identifying with the bent over woman in the synagogue?

2. What thoughts and attitudes do I have that force me to bend over?

3. Who are the individuals whose words and actions have disfigured my spine?

4. What experience has caused me shame, embarrassment, or severe emotional or physical trauma? _____

TIME TO JOURNAL

Reflect on the story. Allow God’s Word to speak to your heart. Listen as the Lord brings you words of comfort and hope. Give yourself permission to write random thoughts as they come to mind. Write a sentence or a paragraph, but begin the process of putting your thoughts into words. You may choose to purchase a personal notebook. _____

TIME FOR PRAYER

Heavenly Father, You have created me – my body, mind, and spirit. Your desire is that I might live life standing tall, standing firm in Your love, the love which is mine because of the sacrifice of Your Son. Like the woman in the story, I, too, have become bent over. But my condition is so much a part of me that I have become oblivious to how crippled I really am. Today, Lord, I am beginning to recognize that I am broken, bruised, and battered by my past. Grant me the courage

Valued Moment #1: *Crippled*

to look honestly at myself. Empower me to admit and confess those things that have kept me bound up. Because of Jesus, set me free!

Father, You have fearfully and wonderfully made me. This day I consider relationships, experiences, and guilt that have bent me over. I especially consider the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of my life – people and events of the recent and distant past. I bring before you... _____

MY DAILY PICK-UP

In the light of this Bible story, and reflecting on how my own life relates to the bent-over woman, who are three individuals I know who are struggling with their own bent-over condition? This week I will pray for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My prayer is that...

VALUED MOMENT #2

CALLED

THE WORD

When Jesus saw her, He called her over. (Luke 13:12a)

The facts are short and simple:

1. _____
2. _____

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

1. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, the Jewish place of worship and learning. What would it be like to be noticed and have someone, a rabbi no less, call you by name in such a public place? _____

2. What would it be like to think you were unnoticed and obscure in your setting and then suddenly become a spectacle for everyone to behold? _____

Jesus had called the crippled woman's name. "The doctor will see you now."

Jesus called her. She didn't have time to fix her hair, check her make-up, or make sure her slip wasn't showing. All she knew was that her name had been called and she was the only one who could respond. So, rising from her seat, she began to make her way toward Jesus.

Someone called this woman out of her obscurity and made her special. He did not ignore her or avoid her. He did not ridicule her or make some backhanded comment about her disfigurement. Instead, Jesus called her just as she was. He was not repulsed by her condition, but saw her with eyes of love. Jesus looked upon her with compassion and called her by name!

Pretend to be the bent-over woman in the synagogue that day. You're just listening as Jesus teaches and suddenly He stops and calls *your* name! Identify your feelings and fears, your emotions and your hope. "The doctor will see *you* now." _____

Valued Moment #2: Called

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. My name is _____. Do I like my name? My nickname(s) is/are _____.

How do I feel about these names?

2. Think about situations in which your name is called. How do you respond in different situations with a variety of people? _____

3. John 10:3 says, “He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.” What does it mean to you to hear Jesus call you by name? _____

4. God gives great value and authority to His own name. His second commandment (Exodus 2:7) teaches us how to honor His name. Power and authority are given in one’s name. If two children are squabbling, one will inevitably run to Mommy and come back with the words of power and authority, “Mommy says...! When has your name been vulnerable, at risk, or misused by another? Who is/are the person(s) involved?

TIME TO JOURNAL

Like the bent-over woman, I address the hopelessness of my crippled condition. So many things keep me bound – my past, my relationships, attitudes, schedule, guilt, addictions. But, today a ray of hope shines in my heart. Jesus has called me forward. Hope is in His voice. Compassion is in His eyes. He has called me, set me apart. As He speaks to my heart I feel...

Valued Moment #2: *Called*

TIME FOR PRAYER

O Jesus, You call me by name. You know me! You know who I am and everything about me. You know all that has disfigured me and has kept me bound up. You know the guilt and shame I carry. You know the experiences of my past and how they have disfigured my stature, my character, my personality, my attitudes.

Yet, in spite of what You know about me, You treasure me. You refuse to let my condition obstruct our relationship. Your love calls me to come to You. Your loving call tells me that I am precious and can come to You just as I am. Your call says nothing will separate me from You, for Your desire is that all would come into a saving relationship with You. Your call is the call of truth. Yes, Jesus, You love me. This, I know!

Today I want to say thank You. Thank You for calling me forward. Thank You for loving me. Thank You for noticing that I exist and that I am a person You have filled with feelings and emotions. Thank You for...

MY DAILY PICK-UP

As I consider those for whom I have been praying during these days, how might I use their name in such a way as to honor them and lift them up as Jesus did to the bent-over woman when He called her forward? In the next ____ (period of time) _____ I will contact each of the individuals I have been lifting up in prayer. I will seek to honor and value them by...

VALUED MOMENT #3

FORGIVEN

THE WORD

Jesus said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.”
(Luke 13:12b)

Once again, the facts are short and simple:

1. _____
2. _____

The Gospel writer St. John says that “the Word [Jesus] became flesh.” The Word spoke the Word. “Woman, you are freed from your disability.”

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

1. The bent-over woman had an audience with Jesus Himself, the Savior of the world. Who was this Jesus? What do you know about Him? Reflect on what you know about Him and consider the source of your information. _____

The One who called the woman forward is the One who made her and continues to value her.

2. “You are set free.” The woman had been bound for eighteen years. Jesus set her free! But what had kept her bound? From what did Jesus free her? What was the spirit that crippled her? What was the burden of bondage from which Jesus had set her free?

3. Jesus had diagnosed a deeper problem – the problem that was the root of her physical deformity. Isn’t it interesting that Jesus said, “You are set free”? Wouldn’t it have been more natural for Jesus to say something like, “Woman, walk straight and tall”? But, in reality, her bondage is common to us all. Her bondage, like ours, is sin and the heavy burden of guilt that we carry.

Issues related to the heart are most important to Jesus. Jesus could see the woman’s physical deformity, but most of all He wanted to set her free from the sin and guilt which denied her access to her Heavenly Father. He knew her infirmity. He could see she was bent over from

Valued Moment #3: *Forgiven*

what life had inflicted upon her. But, above all else, He knew the weight of guilt that touched not only her body but her heart as well. The words, “You are set free” were words of life, of hope, of love.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Write down today’s verse, substituting your own name for the word “woman”.

2. The Word has been spoken. Jesus says, “You are set free.” What is the overweight backpack you are carrying on your shoulders? What are the things you have done for which you refuse to forgive yourself? Who are those who have sinned against you whom you find it difficult to forgive? _____

3. Envision Jesus taking hold of the straps and lifting the burden of your backpack off your shoulders and setting you free. He places the weight of your burden on His own shoulders. Let Jesus bear your burden of sin and guilt. He has already carried it to the cross for you. His life, death, and resurrection have set you free!

TIME TO JOURNAL

Listen quietly as the Lord speaks His words of love and forgiveness to you through His Word. Experience the freedom He offers. “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!” (John 8:36) Write words that describe this freedom that is yours in Christ Jesus.

Valued Moment #3: *Forgiven*

TIME FOR PRAYER

O Lord, like the bent-over woman, I, too, come to you confessing the sin and guilt that weigh me down. I carry my backpack of guilt around with me, continuing to jam in every last thing that I've ever done wrong, refusing to let go of the anger and resentment I feel toward those who have wrongfully treated me. I admit that I am not eager to confess the sin and guilt that I carry. They have been a part of me for so long I can only cry out to You for love and forgiveness, for mercy and grace which come through faith alone in You, Jesus Christ, my Savior. Set me free from my sin, from negative and destructive thoughts, hurtful words, and from failing to do those things I know are right to do. Today I specifically ask you to free me from...

MY DAILY PICK-UP

We live in a world where just about everyone carries a backpack loaded with sin and guilt. People all around us are dying to hear the words, "You are set free." I want to help (name individuals) _____, _____, _____ bring the burden of their bondage – their backpack of sin – to the foot of the cross. In faith and trust, let them leave the guilt that fills their hearts, as they hear the words of Jesus, "You are freed."

These are others, Lord, who rest heavy on my heart today:

VALUED MOMENT #4

TOUCHED

THE WORD

And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight. (Luke 13:13a)

Take a moment to review what has happened.

- Verses 10-11: A crippled woman listens to Jesus teach.
- Verse 12a: Jesus calls the woman over.
- Verse 12b: Jesus releases the woman from her burden with the words, “Woman, you are freed.”

In today’s verse we are reminded that Jesus is concerned about body and soul. The woman’s long years of bondage had crippled her. Her body had become deformed.

An example of similar consequences of physical punishment would be the physical bondage sometimes inflicted on prisoners of war. Men have been confined for weeks, even months and years, in cages too small for their size. Their back muscles are never able to stretch. The prisoners are forbidden to stand erect. When released, they can only maintain a deformed posture.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STORY

1. In your mind’s eye, enter the synagogue. You have just heard Jesus say, “Woman, you are freed.” What is He going to do next? What does He do? You see Him reach out and lovingly lay His hands on her. Other Bible references tell us that Jesus often touched people when He healed them. For an example see Luke 4:40. _____

2. Jesus touched the woman and immediately what happened? What did this mean for her physical being? The Divine Chiropractor had touched the woman. Her Savior and Healer put His hands on her! Now the bondage of her body was also broken. Now she was released in soul and body to walk straight and tall. _____

Valued Moment #4: *Touched*

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What areas of my life reveal the truth that I have been bound and live under the burden of sin? In what parts of my life do I need Jesus to put His healing hands?

On an addiction?

On my schedule?

On my priorities?

On my thoughts?

On my stewardship?

On my values?

On my relationships?

On my _____

2. What is my list? What exactly would I like Jesus to touch in my life? _____

3. Envision how it would feel to be touched by Jesus and set free in both body and soul.

TIME TO JOURNAL

These are the thoughts and feelings that come to mind as I consider those times when I have been touched by Jesus...

When He has put His hands on me...

These are the thoughts and feelings that come to mind as I consider the people who have been Jesus to me – offering to hold me or give me a timely touch of reassurance and support, encouragement and comfort...

Valued Moment #4: *Touched*

TIME FOR PRAYER

O Divine Healer, Jesus, put Your hands on me and heal me. Let my eyes see and my heart feel Your saving grace. I am Your redeemed child. Grant me the courage to look honestly at the consequences of sin's bondage and to look at those harmful things which I have done to myself, as well as what other people and experiences have done to me. Touch me, Lord Jesus. Touch me in these deformed areas of my life...

MY DAILY PICK-UP

I can no more heal myself than the crippled woman could heal herself. God's Word tells us in verse 11 that "she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself." We are all helplessly bent over until we become connected to Jesus and experience His healing touch. God uses people to bring His love to broken people. He uses you and me.

These are ways I can be a vehicle of God's love to touch the lives of others...

Today I am specifically thinking of those I've been praying for. Jesus, help me touch these individuals' lives in these ways this month...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

VALUED MOMENT #5

WORSHIPED

THE WORD

And she glorified God. (Luke 13:13b)

The immediate response of the healed woman was to praise God. What had just happened to invoke such a response? _____

- Verse 12 a: Jesus *called* her.
- Verse 12b: Jesus *forgave* her.
- Verse 13a: Jesus *touched* her.
- Verse 13b: Jesus *healed* her.

The crippled woman who experiences Jesus' call, His forgiveness, His healing touch, now stands to praise Him! Nothing hinders the art of worship. Nothing stands in her way. Her relationship with God has been restored. She is free from all that has crippled her. Her sins are forgiven. Her burden of guilt has been lifted. Her past no longer determines her posture before God and man. Jesus has restored her to wholeness. The victory is hers because of who He is. He is Lord of all!

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

1. Scripture says, "She glorified God." Dig a little deeper and read 1 Timothy 2:3-5. Consider the truths of these verses. What do these verses tell you about the One who healed the crippled woman – about the One whom she praised? _____

-
- God desires all people to be saved.
 - God wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - There is one God.
 - There is one mediator between God and humankind.
 - The one mediator is Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for our salvation.
2. Throughout the book of Psalms, God's people are encouraged to praise the Lord. In the following verses note the variety of imperatives used to tell us to praise the Lord and list some of the things for which we are encouraged to praise Him.

Valued Moment #5: *Worshiped*

For example, in Psalm 100:1-3, God calls us to make a joyful noise, serve Him, and come into His presence. He made us. We are His, His people, His sheep. Write down your thoughts about these Psalms:

a. Psalm 103:1-5 _____

b. Psalm 146:1-2, 6b-10 _____

c. Psalm 18:3 _____

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

As I recognize that all of my life as God's child is worship, what differences will occur...

1. as I relate to family and friends? _____

2. as I consider my attitude toward my work and responsibilities? _____

3. as I evaluate my past and seek a new vision for my future? _____

4. as I determine to reach out to those who have no hope? _____

TIME TO JOURNAL

Make the Reflection Questions a springboard for articulating thoughts that flow from new and deeper insights into understanding and developing a life of worship...

Valued Moment #5: *Worshiped*

TIME FOR PRAYER

Use your list of things found in the previous Psalms to praise God as you thank Him for all that He has done.

O Lord, my heart is filled with worship as I consider all that You are and all that You have done and continue to do for me. Today I want to begin praising You for...

MY DAILY PICK-UP

I look around me and see trees. They lift their boughs upward in worship to their Creator. I hear the birds and listen as they sing their songs of praise to their Maker. I see the mountains standing strong as powerful monuments that exalt the name of the Lord.

But I look at my neighbor next door who lives in darkness, who is crippled and does not even know it. I see my coworkers who live lives bent over and know no reason to acknowledge the One who created them, the One who loves and forgives them. My friends seem to think they have everything and yet have nothing. Guilt burdens them. A lack of love scares them and spiritual things annoy them.

These people are heavy on my heart at this moment. O Jesus, use my life of worship to touch a life for You in these next days. Make my friendship a safe refuge for this person so I can share how You have intervened in my life and have lifted me to a life of praise and worship.

Today, Lord, help me witness my life of worship to others by...

Valued Moment #5: *Worshiped*

Today I want to provide a safe refuge, a place for God's grace to...

Valued Moment #6
RESTRICTED

THE WORD

But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” (Luke 13:14)

What are the facts in this verse?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

1. Jesus knew the Law. What was the Law according to Exodus 20:8-10?

The synagogue ruler also knew the Law. From his perspective Jesus was breaking the Law by healing on the Sabbath.

2. The ruler was determined to throw cold water on this woman’s victory celebration. In the midst of her dance of praise, this religious leader, this scholar of the Law, this respected citizen of the religious community chose to criticize, condemn, and ridicule Jesus’ action. The woman stood center stage. Envision the tension of the moment. The people watching have become part of the cast. Notice their script? They have no lines.
3. Jesus is the One who answers. Jesus points to the self-righteous leader and his companions and exposes their selfish hearts. He reminds them that they work on the Sabbath by taking their farm animals for a drink of water. Their value for their animals surpasses their value for human life. The Law and its restrictions of do’s and don’ts held greater value for them than the grace and mercy Jesus brought to this new Sabbath day!

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Consider a time when you’ve been in the middle of a celebration and someone has rained on your parade. What happened to your celebration? _____

Valued Moments #6: *Restricted*

2. People watch our reactions to life. When something good happens people watch to see how we handle it. When something tragic happens people wonder how we'll make it. When tough times come, people watch from a distance. When we celebrate God's divine intervention in our lives people often respond with questions and uncertainty. What is my reaction to these responses of people? _____

3. Inhibitors are those who live bound by their own limitations and insecurities. They insist that others live within those same confines. In ignorance they live bent over and burdened. Uncertainty, anxiety, and fear of rejection force them to impose their insecurities on others. They are prone to find a reason not to do something positive and insist on thrusting their mindset on others in an attempt to confine and restrict them. Inhibitors restrict progressive action. They can't handle change. They reject anything or anyone who thinks or acts differently than they would. They live controlled by fear and are oblivious to their own bent-over condition. They struggle to keep others bound up as well, hindering them from living as people set free. Who are those who insist that I remain bound up rather than encouraging me to live a free life? Who, or what, are my inhibitors? Do I let the actions of my inhibitors affect me? When? How? _____

TIME TO JOURNAL

Many thoughts are rushing through my head. I know that I have lived life as a bent-over person but I also know that Jesus has spoken to me through these words from Luke 13. My heart has been relieved of its heavy burden of guilt. Jesus has touched me with His healing hand, removing the bruises and pain inflicted on me by others.

But what can I do when certain people and circumstances will not let me live freely? They want to keep me bound, unable to stand straight and tall.

Take some time and consider people and circumstances that will keep you bound up unless you depend on God's ability to empower you to live freely. Think about steps of prevention and choices that will keep you living released and free with Jesus' forgiveness and healing.

Valued Moment #6: *Restricted*

Remember to consider such things as a difficult relationship, a tenacious addiction, and an over-committed schedule. Describe the people and circumstances binding you and ask God for His healing release. _____

TIME FOR PRAYER

O Lord, I have become so conscious of those who try to thrust their fears and limitations on me. They want to consume me with their attempts to restrict and confine me. But, You have set me free. My heart lifts these individuals up to You. You are my Deliverer. When my foes seem to be too many and too strong my only hope is in You. I join You in Your prayer, Jesus. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

MY DAILY PICK-UP

I am so aware of the inhibitors in my life, Jesus. You are my source of support and encouragement. You have brought individuals into my life who are a constant source of strength. Thank You for the gift they have been to me. Thank You, especially, for these people...

Being conscious of the blessing they have been to me, Lord, this week I desire to be a source of encouragement and strength to others. Specifically, I want to encourage...

Valued Moment #6: *Restricted*

Each of these people is going through a difficult time. Lord Jesus, make me a source of encouragement for them that they might entrust their lives to You. Empower them to live lives set free and forgiven.

VALUED

THE WORD

We will look at three references. In this first passage from Luke, Jesus is speaking about the woman He has just healed. He values her and speaks about her to His adversaries as “this woman, a daughter of Abraham.” This is a Jewish woman, one of God’s own chosen people.

“...this woman, a daughter of Abraham...” (Luke 13:16)

This statement leads to the second reference, taken from Isaiah. These words are spoken to the people of Israel. As her advocate Jesus wanted to make it clear what it meant to be called a daughter of Abraham. He was reminding His enemies that she was valued by God as one created by Him, redeemed, called by name, claimed to be His own.

But now, thus says the Lord, He who created you...
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by
Name, you are Mine.” (Isaiah 43:1)

It was not her physical or emotional condition, nor her life experiences, her burden of bondage, or her sin that mattered to Him. All that was significant to Jesus was the very thing He had given her, her redeemed value as a forgiven child of the Heavenly Father.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have
eternal life.” (John 3:16)

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

In your own words share what made this woman a woman of great value.

Who or what gives something its value? Easy answer: It is the one who possesses it! If you have something that I want, you determine the price, the value of that item.

Valued Moment #7: Valued

On the other hand, if the item holds great value for me, I will gladly pay the price you set, even to the point of sacrifice.

In John 3:16 Jesus reveals the high value the Father has placed on you, His child, son or daughter of the Heavenly Father. Jesus wants you to know how valuable you are. He wants you to know the Father’s great love for you, a love that made Him willing to sacrifice His one and only Son in order to buy you back and make you His own. How valuable you are! What a treasured possession!

In your own words share what it means to you to be a person of great value...

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1) God calls me His child! How does this passage relate to Jesus referring to the healed woman as “a daughter of Abraham”?

2. How do these words affect the way I see myself, the way I consider my worth, my full value? _____

3. 1 John 2:1 says, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” How do these verses help to restore your sense of value, despite the negative things you might feel, despite your tarnished and scarred life? What difference does it make to you that Jesus is your Righteousness, that Jesus the Righteous One is your advocate? _____

Valued Moment #7: *Valued*

Here is God’s value pack for you: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:1-2)

TIME TO JOURNAL

To think that Jesus is my advocate in all of life’s arenas reminds me again that I am worth full value to Him. Consider specific times in your days when you feel alone with the struggles of life and want to be mindful that Jesus is your advocate.

Today I need You as my advocate, Jesus, because...

TIME FOR PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You tell me what love is. “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) You gave Your life for me. You have made me Your friend. You have made me Your treasured possession. It is more than I can comprehend. I stand in awe of Your great love. I deserve none of this, yet, in Your grace and mercy You have given me all the rights and privileges as a child of the King, the Most High God. My thoughts overflow with gratitude. I thank You for taking all that has been tarnished and discolored in my life and restoring me to full value through Your life, death, and resurrection. O Jesus, my heart overflows in thankfulness and praise. Thank You for...

Valued Moment #7: *Valued*

MY DAILY PICK-UP

I certainly identify with the penny found along the street. I have been kicked around, scuffed, and lost my shine. But Jesus has rescued me. I am worth full value through Him. He is a shield around me, much like the plastic around the penny on my key chain. Psalm 3:3 reminds me that God is “a shield about me.” He is the glorious One who bestows His glory on me and He is the “lifter of my head.” When the Father looks at me through Jesus He sees me as worth full value to Him.

Who in my life needs to hear the story of the scarred penny this week? Who is the Lord bringing to mind as someone who would be blessed to find out that he/she, too, is worth full value through Jesus? _____

I intend to use my key chain as a means of sharing Jesus with others. Write out a specific way you will use your key chain to create an opportunity to connect someone to Jesus...

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Jogging was once a part of my daily exercise routine. Many days I would return home from my trek with coins I had found along the way. Usually they were pennies I had found on the sidewalk. Every once in a while I would spot one in the road, lying unnoticed in an intersection.

Reflecting on these coins and their surface damage, it occurred to me that, regardless of their condition, if I took any one of them to the bank, the bank would give me full value in exchange for the coin. No one would ask where I had found the coin or how it happened to be in such poor condition. The teller would simply exchange the scarred coin for a new one.

Recently, I've replaced jogging with walking, but my habit of picking up coins along the way has not changed. I continue to watch for them. Rarely are the coins that I have found on the sidewalk severely scratched, but they are left behind, abandoned, and forgotten. Parking lots are another place I frequently find coins. More often than not, these pennies show considerably more wear and tear. Their scratched surfaces reveal a history of repeated tire-crunching abuse. Usually I find the most brutally damaged coins in the intersections. Left on the asphalt and crushed by traffic night and day, these coins are damaged almost beyond the point of recognition.

Some time ago it was my responsibility to plan a women's retreat. The women were ministers' wives whose husbands served in churches throughout the United States. As I began to plan, I ask the Lord to direct my mind and heart, that what I prepared would touch the hearts of the women who would be attending. I prayed that the study would be meaningful and applicable to their individual lives, and also have lasting value for them when they returned home.

Rather quickly, I chose Luke 13:10-17, the story of the bent-over woman whom Jesus healed. This was to be the biblical text. This woman represents thousands, even millions, of people throughout this world who are bent over for a variety of reasons and long to be healed and empowered to stand straight again. They may be bent over physically, bearing the burden of a deformity or illness. They may be bent over emotionally, bearing the burden of broken and battered inner spirits. Difficult life experiences damage us. We live bent over, distorted and disfigured, like the coins I find—tarnished, scarred, even mutilated.

My own encounter with a bent-over woman came one afternoon when I went to my bank and asked the teller if I could purchase some mutilated pennies. I explained that I was leading a women's retreat and wanted to use the coins as an object lesson.

As the teller worked, we continued our conversation. I explained that there are many women who are like tarnished coins. They face a variety of experiences in life that trap them in

their condition—ridicule to physical and verbal abuse to the burden of guilt. They feel worthless and hopelessly

I explained that I intended to have the pennies embedded in plastic and hand them out to the audience as a reminder to the women that, just as the bank would give me full value for any damaged coin I would bring for exchange that God does the same thing for me. When God looks at me through Jesus—through His life, death, and resurrection—He assures me that I am worth full value to Him, regardless of my used condition. As I would encase the pennies in hard plastic, Jesus is the shield around me, the One who makes me worth full value to my Heavenly Father.

Finishing her tasks, the bank teller raised her head, looked me in the eye, and said, “You were brought here to say this just for me today. In my own life I’m being told things that are not true. The lies are destroying me. I’ve been told them for so long that I’m starting to believe them. I need to remember that I am valuable. I am significant.”

“Yes,” I said. “Your value is determined by how God looks at you. To Him, you are a priceless treasure. When God looks at you through Jesus, you are worth full value to Him.” Leaving her, I said, “Don’t forget the story of the mutilated coin!”

May these Valued Moments of ***Set Free and Standing Tall*** provide for you the opportunity to reflect as you consider your own life. May these Moments be a time of encouragement as you consider blessing the lives of others, reminding them that they, too, are worth *full value through Jesus*.

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