

This Too Shall Pass!

by Maxine McLellan

As I write this article, it is January 14. It appears February slid in early while I dreamt last night. I was taking a short-cut to my destination, climbing a mountain of sand that kept sliding under my feet. The sand had rosebuds and petals throughout it but I was so busy struggling, there was no time to enjoy them. A group of marathon runners sped by me with apparent ease! As I crested the top of the mountain someone urged me to keep going. Apparently, just over the top I would reach my destination. My excitement was dashed as I slid down the other side into a deep cave of pitch darkness and more all consuming, smothering sand. My, was I exhausted, but glad to wake up this morning!

February has historically NOT been my month. It often begins in early January and ends in mid-March! Although most of the year my house is in good order, please don't come in February! We are swamped with beginning-of-the-year business tasks and boxes of paper everywhere for printing new catalogues and books. The Christmas season and business year-end bookkeeping and inventory counting preceded all of this. Then there are my usual responsibilities as the full-time and very active pastor's wife in my church, and as the primary educator for two girls - one of whom has major learning challenges and requires much one-on-one assistance. Add in the contributions of chronic health problems and general life, and you have a formula for discouragement, and, at times, feelings of defeat and panic. Will I EVER get everything done? It is time to remind myself once again that, "Yes, this too shall pass!"

No doubt you too have days, weeks, or months that mirror my February. The dreary days of winter lend themselves well to creating an I QUIT attitude. This is NOT the time to make major, far reaching decisions such as, I QUIT - Period!! I QUIT trying to keep up with dishes, laundry, cooking, mothering (fathering) . . . because I can't do it anyway! I certainly QUIT home schooling - put them back into school, any school will do!! I QUIT outside-of-the-home commitments. I QUIT helping other people. I QUIT trying to keep everything running smoothly. Consider how ridiculous those "I QUIT" statements would sound on a bright sunny day when you are feeling in control and that it is great to be alive. Remember the words, "This too shall pass!"

If overwhelmed, temporarily put on hold some things that have no eternal significance such as dusting, vacuuming, complicated meals, baking, or events you really don't need to attend. Take a month to put

away the school books, play outside with the children, go for walks, write letters to friends, take afternoon naps, rest, and read good books. If, on the other hand, you and the children are bored because you have only academics to fill your day, get out and visit someone, help a senior or shut-in, or plan a special service or ministry project.

February is NOT the month for a home school support group meeting where you all discuss your successes or stresses of the year to date. That is a recipe for depression if ever there was one! Everyone digs deep and finds the most spectacular "highlights" of their year because they don't want anyone to know they may be feeling less than adequate in their home educating efforts. Everyone goes home feeling guilty that they have not accomplished the sum total of everyone else's successes. Or, in the sharing of problems, everyone goes home burdened with the sum total of perceived failures experienced by the members of the group. Nothing like an avalanche dumped on you! Instead, have everyone go outside and throw snowballs at one another, make snow angels, or take a walk in a park and finish up with a hot chocolate and cookies!

When your life seems out of your control, remember, God is always in control. Call a cheerful friend who can help you gain a new perspective or give positive advice about a problem you may be facing. Set out cheerful artificial flowers. Sing and/or listen to uplifting songs. Post encouraging scriptures and poems around the house and read them! Here are some of my favourites: Song: His Strength is perfect, when our strength is gone. He'll carry us when we can't carry on!

Scripture: I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!

Poem: by Honoria Grove

"Everything's under control"

Praise God, there's peace in my soul;
Though problems abound,
I have heard the blessed sound-
"Everything's under control."

Sometimes we wrestle so long
with problems when things all go wrong.
Our minds may not see
What the answer might be,

but everything's under control.

The controlling is not done by me;
Though things aren't as I'd like them to be.
But when I've done my best,
God takes care of the rest,
And everything's under control.

Praise God, when I'm in His control,
And to Him have committed the whole,
His living wisdom and might
Will make things turn out right -
For everything's under control.

And challenges written by writers unknown to me:

-The way of obedience is the way of blessing; we stumble over pebbles, not mountains; brooding over the past paralyses the present and bankrupts the future!

- And, particularly appropriate in light of my dream, "When faced with a mountain, I WILL NOT QUIT! I will keep on striving until I climb over, find a pass through, tunnel underneath

-or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine, with God's help!"

And always remember, "This too shall pass," and the sunny days of spring WILL come!

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