

THE SNIFF TEST

Back in August I asked the Lord what I should write about next. A few days later the answer came in a vision. I saw myself standing in front of my ex-husband, who was holding my jacket in his hand. Suddenly he brought my jacket to his nose, inhaled deeply, and said "It smells like you". **End of vision.**

I had an instant understanding of my next writing assignment. Last year I went through some pretty intense testing to refine my character. There were areas that needed work, specifically in the area of self-control. The first clue I had that a time of testing was imminent was when the Lord gave me a quick vision of Jesus in the wilderness being tested by Satan. At that time I didn't realize He was giving me a heads-up that I was about to go into the wilderness.

Not long after that, my calm and peaceful interactions with all the people I cared about suddenly took a turn for the worse. My loved ones suddenly became very offended by me. Whatever I said or did was taken the wrong way. They would get angry with me, call me names, and insult my character. Bewildered, I went back to the Lord and asked him what on earth was going on?

On 8/19/2019 I had a dream where I was with a coworker in the cafeteria of our office building. In the dream, we were loading up our trays with food from a buffet style table. Suddenly she leaned over and whispered to me "You know you smell, don't you?" I said "Excuse me?" She said "Yeah, you really do smell." Suddenly, I grabbed a fistful of jello off the buffet table and smeared it into her face, eyes and nose. Immediately, I could feel myself being physically removed from the situation and placed in another room where it was conveyed to me that I did not react appropriately and would need to be tested again. **End of dream.**

Now the Lord likes to exaggerate things to get my attention. Since my dream reaction was so over the top, he was pinpointing my reaction to other people attacking my character. And, just in case you are wondering - no, I have never reacted like that in real life. However, I used to have a tendency to "get into my flesh" when personally attacked.

He also gave me another interesting dream on 8/1/2019. In that dream I had just started a new job as a bus driver. So it was my first day on the job and I was fumbling with the controls, trying to figure out how exactly to open the bus door. I kept toggling different switches and levers, hunting for the right one. Finally my female boss, who was not physically present but able to watch me remotely, announced over a speaker that she would help me. **End of dream.**

Since I was fumbling with the bus "controls" that meant that I was struggling in the area of self-control. And Jesus, represented by my dream boss, was telling me that He wanted to help me. I just love the way the Lord speaks!

So upon waking, I told the Lord that I was sorry for not responding to others in the way He wanted me to respond. I wasn't saved until I was 53 years old, so I had over half a century to perfect my bad habits. I honestly didn't know how to respond to others when they attacked me. In my family, it was always the person who shouted the loudest and acted out the most who prevailed. I started praying for guidance on how I should respond when people attack me. Then it dawned on me that there must be clues in His Word.

Soon I came across the story of David interacting with his older brother Eliab in 1 SAMUEL 17:28-30. David asked his brother a simple question, but Eliab responded by immediately attacking him. There seemed to be a long history between them, of Eliab picking on David. I just loved David's response, how

he pretty much ignored him and asked someone else the same question. So David did not take Eliab's bait to engage. He refused to respond in kind. Instead of 'getting into his flesh', he overlooked the insults. By taking the high road, David kept himself from sin and allowed God to deal with Eliab's character issues.

Another amazing passage was when Shimei began cursing and throwing stones at King David as he was fleeing the palace. (2 Samuel 16:5-13). David must have been at one of the lowest points in his life since he had just learned his son had betrayed him and here he was being cursed and pelted with stones. And yet, his response was to not respond in kind and to ignore it.

I believe the Lord is getting us ready to deal with persecution when it comes. I had an interesting dream on 7/17/2019 that I believe was from the Lord. In the dream I stopped in a Mexican restaurant to get some breakfast. The owners, a husband and wife team, assisted me. For no apparent reason, they became upset with me. Suddenly the man asked his wife if the cameras were off. She said they were. Then he turned to me and started cursing me in Spanish. When he stopped, I said "You cannot curse what the Lord has blessed." Then I left the restaurant. **End of dream.**

One passage that comforts me when people attack me without cause is Matthew 5:11. It says "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you."

Another thing that helps me is to remember that we are in a spiritual battle and our war is not against flesh and blood. The enemy just loves to stir up conflict between people, especially Christians. And he loves to cause strife and division in families. So it helps to realize that sometimes a loved one will attack us because the enemy has planted a lie in their minds and messed with their emotions. So if you can recognize that the attack is indirectly from the enemy and not from the person saying the unkind things, you won't take their words personally. I remember the first time it dawned on me that the reason I was being attacked was because the enemy had planted a spirit of offense in that person. Suddenly their hurtful words and actions didn't hurt as much. I knew that it really wasn't personal – it was spiritual. Recognizing who the real enemy is makes all the difference in the world. And it allows me to continue to treat that person with love and gentleness despite how badly they may behave.

I remember one conversation in particular that I had with a family member. She made the comment that she didn't even want to talk to me anymore because our conversations always ended badly. And was I trying to pick a fight with her? Fortunately we were communicating via text so I had time to formulate my response. I finally said to her "Well, just know that I love you very much and whenever you want to talk, I'm here for you". That seemed to defuse the situation. Sometimes the best strategy of all is to respond in love because Satan doesn't understand it at all. It throws the enemy camp into confusion.

Scriptures

DEUTERONOMY 8:2 And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not. 3And he humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.

DEUTERONOMY 8:5 You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.

HEBREWS 12:5 For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. 7If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? 8But if you be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are you illegitimate children, and not sons.

PROVERBS 21:23 Whosoever keeps his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles.

PROVERBS 25:28 He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

COLOSSIANS 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body; and be thankful.

MATTHEW 5:11 Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.

2 TIMOTHY 3:3 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

JOHN 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'