



Reflections by the Lake
Devotions for an Unordinary Time

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Learning to Let Go
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*I Peter 1:6-9: "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your **faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your **faith**, the salvation of your souls."*

When we lived on Lakeland Drive in Raleigh, there was a tree that sat on the edge of the woods in our backyard. I don't know the correct name for that tree, but I called it a "stringwood" tree. The bark was rough and peeling and the leaves were a beautiful green color through the summer. There was something different about that tree, however. That tree never shed its leaves in the fall. The leaves would turn a light brown and then they would hang on. Through wind and rain...through ice and snow...those leaves held fast. Not a single one would drop to the ground. Then, when spring arrived and warm weather cheered us all, the branches would begin to bud out with new leaves. Then and only then would the old, brown, dead leaves drop to the ground.

This phenomenon happened year after year for the 17 years we lived in that home. As I observed this tree and its reluctance to let go of what it knew (leaves), I thought about the Christian life. In particular, I thought about faith and what an example that tree is of a LACK of faith. It held on to what it knew. It held on for dear life. Through storms and ice and snow, it never let go. Only when it KNEW for certain that more leaves would come did it "let go and let God."

How many of us do this in our lives? Rather than stepping out in faith—completely unsure and unaware of what might be ahead—we hold on to what we know. We give lip service to "letting go" but we don't do it. We just hold on to life as we know it. What if? What if we let go? What if we stepped out in faith and stood in amazement at what God can do? What if we stood in wonder at the mighty works of God in our lives—works we could never have imagined if we continued to hold on to just what we know?

What are you holding onto during this pandemic? You fill in the blanks. I challenge each of us today to examine our hearts to see where God might want us to let go so that he can bless us beyond our imagination.

Prayer:

Father, we are so blessed and yet, even in the midst of our blessings, we seem to feel there are some things we can do better than you—that somehow, we just don't need you to get involved in this situation or that circumstance. Give us the courage to stand tall in faith this day. Give us the courage to let go of the things we are holding onto because we think you can't handle it as well as we can. Give us the gift of the blessing of faith so that we can be used by you as a blessing to others. Amen.