



The Journey
Week of 11.07.10

the beautiful fight: how to return

by Sarah Leimer

Nearly four years ago, I was longing for something more in my life. I was happy enough on the surface and to the untrained eye. But those who truly knew me could see the girl inside me questioning if this was all the Christian life had to offer. I had a steady job, great friends and loved being involved at Heartland. I had seen God moving in the lives of many around me, but had never really experienced his presence and leadership firsthand. I believed that Christianity was an adventure for some, but had pretty much resigned myself that it was not really going to be that way for me. I believed there had to be more to this life of faith I was living, but I did not know how or if it was even possible for me to play a vital role in the greater story that was being told. I felt lost.

It has been four years since I felt that way and since I decided to put my faith into action and obey what I believed God was calling me to do. Four years since I obeyed his whisper to trust him. Four years since I felt like that lost girl looking around believing that God had saved all of his adventure and wonder for someone else. Four years since I laid my bank account on the line and actually committed to tithing for the next three plus years as part of Heartland's Go Campaign. Four years since I became part of something God was doing that was beyond myself or anything I could imagine. Four years since my life was radically transformed from hum into a beautiful, wild adventure. I look back at who I was four years ago, and I merely wonder what took me so long to accept and choose to join the party to which God had been inviting me.

That simple yet difficult decision to tithe for the first time unlocked both my heart and my hands. My heart was unlocked as I broke through the barrier I had built between myself and God. My not tithing as God requests, was saying to him that I really did not trust him to provide in my life. Tithing unlocked my hands because suddenly I was out on a limb trusting God as I never had before. My hands had to be open, not only to let go of what he wanted to remove from my life, but also so I could receive what he had to give me in this new place of trust.

I look at myself today and recognize that I am a different person than I was before the first campaign. Yet I know I am far from becoming the woman I am designed to be in Christ. I am still standing with shaking legs, an open heart, and open hands before God, eager to discover what he has planned next. I have never been a big risk taker or adrenaline junkie, and I'm not a person who practices great acts of bravery in my spare time. However, I now understand with absolute certainty, that giving to God more than we think is safe is a risk that is always worth taking. God honors our faithfulness and not only transforms the gifts we offer for the good of his kingdom, but he transforms the heart of the giver as well...and we are forever changed for the better.

"The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

~Isaiah 51:11

(You are encouraged to use the SOAP – Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer Method for a guide. Click [here](#) to read more about developing your devotional life. Click [here](#) for an example SOAP journal entry. If you don't own a Bible, pick up "The Story of God" Bible available for free at the Welcome Center in our atrium.)

monday, 11.08.10

Read: [Malachi 2:17 – 3:5](#)

tuesday, 11.09.10

Read: [2 Corinthians 8:16-21, Malachi 3:6-18](#)

wednesday, 11.10.10

Read: [1 Timothy 6:3-10](#)

thursday, 11.11.10

Read: [Proverbs 3:1-10, 1 Timothy 6:17-19](#)

friday, 11.12.10

Read: [Matthew 6:1-4; 19-21](#)

If you don't already receive weekly email notification about The Journey, click [here](#) to sign up.

grow (resources to help you in your study)

- **Sunday's Sermon:** Click [here](#) for podcast, or here for [video](#)
- **book:** [The Treasure Principle](#) by Randy Alcorn
- **book:** [Generosity](#), a four-week devotional by Gordon MacDonald – available at The Beautiful Fight space as our gift to you

go (action steps)

- **prayer?** Please send us an email by clicking [here](#)
- **care?** Do you need to talk with someone? Please call us at 913.341.5820 ext. 330
- **go**—Sign up to serve: email Lisa Zulke by clicking [here](#)
- **grow**—Join a small group, a 1:1 spiritual mentorship, or find about the many other [ways to grow](#)
- **give**—click [here](#) to make an online gift to Heartland and learn how you can set up recurring gifts

Small Group/ 1:1 Question Samplers:

1. God's Word tells us that where we place our treasure, (God's money), we place our hearts (Luke 12:34). Where are you placing your earthly treasure? Where do your first fruits go? Are they going towards an eternal or earthly account?
2. Pray and thank God for your talents, your finances, your struggles, your stuff, your work and even your debts. Ask him for wisdom and clarity for how he would like you to proceed with all he has entrusted you to manage. What are the changes he is nudging you to make?
3. Have you ever given more than felt safe to give? How were your life and heart changed as a result?