

## **A Devotional on “God’s Toolbox”**

By Kathy Brannon

In mid June, I learned that my first husband died suddenly of a massive stroke. Although we had been divorced for 25 years, there were issues, challenges and considerations to encounter as the family was about to go through the process of bringing the earthly aspects of a human life to closure.

Some of the challenges ahead were:

1. Loss of a parent to the two adult sons - grief
2. My oldest son, Mike, hadn't seen his dad for three years due to his tour of duty in Okinawa. Mike is a major in the Marine Corp. – guilt!
3. Mike's dad had never met his youngest grandchild that was born in Okinawa – more guilt!
4. Mike's new orders were to return to the US (San Antonio) at the end of June. His dad's death put into motion the effort to get his orders changed to be able to leave Okinawa immediately - stress
5. My younger son, Mat, was in line for a major promotion opportunity and he was completely focused on the due diligence to ensure success. His dad's death was really “bad timing” – guilt, stress, conflicted issues
6. How was I going to interface with a family that I had not had a relationship with for 25 years – stress
7. What was the appropriate level of my involvement in the funeral arrangements and personal closure consideration - anxiety
8. An unexpected issue was establishing a new relationship with my older son and his family. I hadn't been involved with their daily lives for three years. During that time, they had a new baby, my son assumed much more responsibility in his career and my daughter-in-law launched her own small

business as a photographer. In the midst of burying his dad, Mike and I had to get to know one another again.

As I began to look to God for strength and guidance, He led me to His toolbox. For me, it was a little book I found called Promises From God for Women. This little book has been a source of strength, guidance, grace and courage in my daily journey.

The areas of need and the tools required to support them in this journey were:

Anxiety	Hope
Compassion	Hospitality
Encouragement	Humility
Faith	Joy
Family	Loneliness
Forgiveness	Love
Gratitude	Patience
Guidance	Peace
Grace	Prayer
Guilt	Stress

Here are a few of the major issues and tools that revealed themselves during this challenging journey:

**Anxiety:**

It would be naïve to think that ominous clouds will not at some point gather, darkening our lives, It would be futile to try to ignore them in the foolish belief they, by denying their existence, they would eventually disappear. It is better to prepare for such times by standing firm in the almighty God who controls the storm. However threatening the circumstances may be, it is imperative that you not allow anything to disrupt God's pivotal role in your life. With Him as the center you will be able to maintain your balance at all times. When your entire being is consumed by

reverence and love for God, you will discover that fear no longer rules your mind. Uncertainty is replaced by trust. The ominous clouds might still be present, but you will see the silver lining, and you will know that, behind every cloud, there is a loving Father who works all things for your good.

*For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.*

*Psalm 91:11, NKJV*

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; who shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.*

*Psalm 27:1, NKJV*

### **Compassion:**

Jesus provides us with an overview of how disciples should act. They should do good to others without expecting anything in return. It is much easier to do good to others if you know that they are going to reward you for your generosity. But Jesus wants you to be willing to lend without expecting to get anything back, to help those who are trying to harm you, and to reach out to others and provide for their needs without first trying to determine whether they deserve it. In short, you should do to others as you would have them do to you. The reason is found in Luke 6:36 – “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you.*

*Ephesians 4:3, NIV*

*Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

*Hebrews 13:16, NKJV*

### **Grace:**

Grace is the unmerited favor of God; it is such favor adapting itself to your personal needs. It describes the disposition of a loving and holy God toward His sinful and undeserving creatures. Let us think for a moment of this grace, for if we begin to understand it, we shall appreciate it, and if we appreciate it, we shall all the more adore and love the God of all grace. God has taken the initiative and dealt with our sins. He now offers pardon and peace and power to the sons of men. God's grace is abundant, there is no hesitation or limitation to the pardon; there is no shadow about the acceptance; and there is no restriction in the resources which are now ours in Christ Jesus.

*God opposed the proud, but gives grace to the humble.  
James 4:6, ESV*

*God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.  
2 Corinthians 9:8, NKJV*

**Love:**

It was no exaggeration when Paul wrote that if he had gifts of eloquence, prophecy and knowledge and yet was lacking love, all the other gifts went for nothing. Divine love shed abroad in the heart is of all gifts the one that most eloquently interprets and understands the Divine Mind. Before this, prejudices dissolve and barriers fall. We must, therefore, live our lives in love under the sweet restraint of God's active love for others. This will please God and make possible a continuance of Christ's own personal ministry to His disciples, as though He again washes their feet, and listens to their triumphs and failures. Let us therefore ask God for a loving spirit that is kind and generous in its judgments, warm in its appreciations, and let us ask that it may be genuine and active.

*A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

*John 13:34-35, NKJV*

**Stress:**

Stress is the extra demand made on your body during tense, sad, demanding or dangerous situations. It causes people to fight the danger or flee from it. How can we find peace in times of continuous stress? We need to be aware of our own limitations and strengths. Do not carry the burden of the past with you. Don't nurture your grievances. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself. He gives you the grace and peace that you need to handle the stress.

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

*Isaiah 40:29, NIV*

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you the rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

*Matthew 11:28-30, KJV*

*When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, help me up.*

*Psalms 94:18, KJV*