

“Partners In Destiny”

by LaBreeska Hemphill



It is hard to believe that Joel and I will celebrate our 53rd wedding anniversary this summer. That represents a lot of togetherness! From the beginning, there has been much “trial and error,” finding out what works and what doesn’t, where our boundaries lie, and what each of our positions in this union should be. One thing that was never in question is our love for God and for each other.

True love for the Lord and His word always keeps us on the right track. When emotions run high it may take time, but eventually if we want to be right before Him we will see our mistakes, correct them, and move on.

Having said that I would like to dwell on mine and Joel’s love for each other. Just how important it has been to nurture the love and how it has continued to grow through the years. I would like to encourage all married women to “love their husbands” (Titus 2:3-4), to honor them as the head of the house, and together many wonderful things can be accomplished. If there is internal struggle over headship no one is the winner. Both partners are the losers. But when we honor each other then we become “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7). Many couples have risen to greatness because they simply believed in each other, and that alone can bring out the very best that each has to give.

I shudder to think how little that Joel and I would have accomplished in our lifetime if we hadn’t **worked together**. I’m sure our story would be much different than it is today.

Down through the ages men of destiny have found soul mates; partners who loved them with a love so deep and fierce they were willing to stand against all odds to help them reach their goals. Many of these courageous women have suffered beyond measure as they walked through life with single-minded determination to obey God, follow their husbands and fulfill destiny.

One doesn’t have to look far to find such a woman. Pick up the Bible, turn to Genesis and you’ll find Sarah. The Lord told her husband Abraham:

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1).

Sarah could have stayed behind. She could have said, I’m not about to leave my home, my family, and go on a wild pursuit! But she didn’t. Abraham’s call became her call as well. And even though she made mistakes in the years ahead, while trying to bring about God’s purpose before His timing, she never one time doubted the call of God on her husband’s life.

The Bible is full of great love stories. Among them is the story of Jacob and Rachel. It looked like happenstance that the two of them should first meet at the water well in Haran but it was ordained of God. Jacob served her father seven years for her hand in marriage; “and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had for her” (Genesis 29:20). And of course Jacob’s name was later changed to Israel by God, and Rachel took her place beside him as they slowly and painfully arrived at their place of honor in the pages of God’s great history book.

Our own history books tell many great love stories of men with a destiny to fulfill, accompanied by loving, caring, devoted partners, tirelessly working beside them.

John Adams, our second President, and his wife Abigail are prime examples. Abigail was a frail, sickly child whose father and great-grandfather were ministers of the gospel. I have been fascinated with Abigail Adams for years. She had no formal education because of her declining health but was taught by her mother and sisters to read and write. She also had access to large libraries belonging to her grandfather and became one of the most learned and scholarly women to ever serve as First Lady. That fact is of much benefit for us today for it is through her writings that we learn of their outstanding love and the endless hardships she overcame to help him achieve. In December 1773, after nine years of marriage and six children, when John was traveling as a circuit judge, she wrote, “Alas! How many snow banks divide thee and me...”

Abigail and John’s marriage relationship is well documented through their correspondence. Their hardships, their separations and their faith earned them a place among the great. She and John were active members of the First Parish Church in Quincy, and in a letter to her son John Quincy she wrote of her religious beliefs.

“I acknowledge myself a unitarian - Believing that the Father alone, is the Supreme God, and that Jesus Christ derived his Being, and all his powers and honors from the Father...There is not any reasoning which can convince me, contrary to my senses, that three is one and one is three.”

In another letter she wrote: “When will mankind be convinced that true religion is from the heart, between man and his creator...?”

I have mentioned just a few great couples, “partners in destiny,” that we are acquainted with, but I am convinced that there are countless others that have traveled through time that we have no record of. People whose lives weigh heavy on God’s scales and are numbered among the great couples who have carried the banner, fought the fight, and finished their course.

I would like to think that Joel and I fit somewhere in that last sentence. Our love and devotion to God and to each other has stood the test of time, change, and hardships. But with great anticipation we “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

These women who have obtained favor with God have persevered. They were givers and not takers. They had faith that moved them to action

“Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised” (Hebrews 11:11).

Here are a few lines taken from one of my husband's latest songs that could fit Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, John and Abigail and a host of others who have had to pay “The Cost of the Call.”

I have traveled on some highways
That in truth I had rather not gone down
In need I looked for some I thought were friends
And they could not be found
I almost lost my faith, my hope, my mind
I nearly lost it all
But I put it on the altar
And I said its just the cost of the call

The bridge of this song says it all.

There's no way that those who are not called
Can really understand those who are
They do not hear the sound of that trumpet
Aren't beckoned by that star
But the quest outweighs the questions
And the destination's more than worth it all
So I put it on the altar
And I say its just the cost of the call

Prayer:

Dear Lord let me be named among those women who were counted loyal, reliable, dependable, honorable and enduring. And when others think of me, may they say as was said of Abigail Adams, “she is a woman of both passion and principal.” And Lord I would like to be remembered as standing by my husband, as partners in destiny, and being willing to pay the cost of the call. In Jesus name. Amen.