



The Gift Around The Corner

The greatest surprises are sometimes just around the corner. My friend Mike and I were eating a hotel breakfast in Colorado Springs. Just as we were ready to leave for an exciting *Restoration of the Heart* training conference with Dr. Dan Allender and John Eldredge as national keynote speakers, a man burst into the dining area. Seeing us sitting at a table, he implored that we help a woman who needed a ride to the conference. It was abrupt and I was taken aback. Thankfully, my proper etiquette reluctance was interrupted by Mike's gracious smile and quick "yes!"

The imploring gentleman then escorted Jane around the corner. After a rather awkward introduction, we discovered this tall stately woman made the long journey from Houston to Colorado Springs alone. We not only headed to the conference together, but quickly became conference friends, chatting about shared stories covering great distance! Jane was amazing! She was in her mid-80's and full of life! This mother of six (including triplets) was engaging, gracious, reflective and so appreciative of our time together. Throughout the conference events, we talked about how God met us in our lives. Jane began her spiritual journey in her 50's, and wanted to be used by the Lord to help others where she lived. She helped pioneer a woman's flying club in the 1960's that flew from the east coast to the west coast. To celebrate her 80th birthday, she went skydiving! Mike and I exchanged astonished glances as Jane wondered aloud if her life was at all exciting!

When asked why she continued to travel to conferences on spiritual growth, Jane thoughtfully stated, "I don't simply want to [only] quilt!" Mike and I commented on her passion for the Lord and encouraged her to continue to be fruitful in all seasons of her life. Like all people, Jane experienced deep sadness and loss. But amidst her many sorrows, Jane was a vibrant soul...full of joy, wonder, courage and appreciation for life. After the conference, and back at the hotel of our initial meeting, she hugged us and profusely thanked us for "hanging around an old woman." I hoped we adequately conveyed that we were the ones gifted by her presence!

The restoration conference was remarkable, but being with our beloved Christian sister, Jane, was an equal highlight. Christian author, Phillip Yancey, wisely stated that the best word which embodies the life of a growing believer is *gratitude*. And that perfectly described Jane! Her long lived gracious spirit was contagious. Her joy uplifted us. Her courage inspired us. Upon my return, I expressed to my wife, "If I live into my mid 80's, I want to be like Jane!" I thanked God for His gracious surprise that came around the corner.

Dave

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