

BEING THE BEST I CAN BE

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And the 2007 'Excellence in Teaching Award' goes tooo ... Renee Nessman! The crowd goes wild as I stand up, walk to the front of the auditorium with my head held high and walk across the stage to shake Mr. Lloyd Robinson's hand, to receive my award. The cameras flash and I can't stop smiling. I look across the audience to where my family is standing and clapping, the sound of the crowd lessens, the picture begins to fade and then, **I wake up**. Yes, it was only a dream. I teach my children and students to dream big, so why can't I? While studying for an education degree, confirmation of a teacher doing an excellent job meant receiving a physical award. At that time this is all I wanted. However, after many years of teaching I have come to another conclusion, I now want to be the best teacher God created me to be.

I remember hearing how Albert Einstein and brain specialists and top scientists came to the conclusion that he only used about 10% of his brain. This is the one and only Albert Einstein whose scientific research, theories and formula's have made history. Then the thought came to me, *I am no different than he is, what if I used 100% of my brain capacity? I am certain this is possible. Why not request that God use me to my fullest potential.* This is a bold request and it made me a little nervous to know that with God this is truly possible. It would mean changes for me that would continually take me out and beyond the safety of my comfort zone. Who knows, He may even ask me to preach sermons or give lectures. I must remember *with God all things are possible* (Matthew 19:26). Jesus told his disciples *if you have faith the size of a mustard seed you can move mountains.* I had a decision to make, live life the way I want to live it or live it the way God intended for me. So with sincerity and faith I made my request known to God. In the Bible God promised that *He will give you the desires of your heart* (Psalms 37:4). I always wanted an adventurous life. I can envision traveling the world with a backpack or on a mountain bike exploring unknown areas. Now I am going to trust that God will do incredible things with me because I have asked Him.

Right now my life consists of a different type of adventure teaching 12 students in grades K-4, being a mom to two beautiful children ages 2 and 7, being a wife to a wonderfully devoted husband, making an effort to build stronger bonds with my sisters, staying connected to my best friend, long-distance, and reconnecting with my mom. If God the Father dwells in Jesus and Jesus dwells in me (John 17: 22-23), then I can be like Jesus to each of the individuals I am in contact with. Every action I take, every look I give, every word I say has the potential of revealing Christ through me. God knows I have fallen short of expressing His love. I am embarrassed to admit I have shut down annoying students, yelled for no reason at my own children, blamed my husband for my shortcomings, neglected to stay in touch with my sisters, didn't send my best friend a birthday card and have been unkind to my mom. This happens easily when I am in control. To know that Jesus can *still* use me is truly a miracle. Realizing this, I want to let go of the controls and give them to God.

In order to operate under God's control and guidance I need to daily walk close with Him. That means spending time with Him everyday, allowing His will to be done in my life and asking for the power of the Holy Spirit. I need to remember there is a deceiver here who is working against me. He is real and He isn't at all intimidated by me. Samuel Chadwick states that *Satan laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray*. There is an invisible spiritual battle fought every second of every day that we live. It is foolish to think we can handle it on our own. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians he told them to *put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil* (Ephesians 6:1). We must be real with ourselves, admit our weaknesses and accept Christ's help. We must claim the promise recorded in 2 Corinthians 12: 9 where Jesus said, *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness*. It is in our weakness that Christ can truly do His work of refining and molding us into the beautiful creatures He intended.

Jesus has done so much for me, any sacrifice I make pales in comparison with His redemption mission carried out on this earth. How arrogant I would be to think I could really be something great without Him. I think of myself as the servant who received one talent in the *Parable of the Talents* (recorded in Matthew 25: 14-30). I may not have as many talents as the other servants yet I have a choice. To do things my way and bury them or to invest them with the Master and give Him any interest gained. When Jesus comes again, seated on His throne in all His glory. Attended by the angels I want His words for me to be *Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matthew 25:34). Being everything God created me to be goes beyond being the best teacher I can be. It is actually imitating the Best Teacher there ever was!