



*Paula Hampton*

I'm not much for New Year's resolutions, but there are a few things I'd like to be more intentional about in 2010, areas of my life that need God's transforming power. Undoubtedly, these represent areas of weakness in my life; maybe they're areas of weakness for you too. This week we've already thought about how we can listen well, respond gently, be fully present to others, choose life-giving activities or ministries, and encourage others. For the next two days, I'd like us to think about discerning truth and trusting more fully.

Larry and I have been learning about trust over the past year. With two children in college and one yet in high school, we have lots of opportunities to practice "releasing" them into God's care. Our family lives, works, and worships in Newberg, Oregon.

*BIBLE READING: Proverbs 12:15-19; James 1:5-7*

*Let truth prosper.* I like that old Quaker phrase. In times of misunderstanding and confusion, I believe truth—like cream—eventually floats to the top. It may seem overly optimistic and it often requires waiting, but in the end, truth prevails.

As followers of Jesus we have a role in helping “truth prosper.” Aren’t we to be “wise as serpents and gentle as doves”? And what does that mean in our day to day lives?

First, we need to be informed. Before we pass information along to others, we need to check our sources and be sure we’re not passing along misinformation. How many times over the past year have we seen the results of rumor mongering (from both “sides”) as we’ve approached elections, a struggling economy, or health care or educational reforms? And can we honestly ask ourselves what role—if any—we’ve played in propagating rumors, or in prospering truth? Early Friends were known as truth-tellers, honest and simple in word and deed. How are we measuring up?

Second, we need to be open to changing our view of the “truth.” We need to be willing to ask, “Is my faith defined by what I think I know, or defined by truth? Am I willing to lay aside preconceived ideas and traditions—to allow a “paradigm crash”—in order to embrace truth? Am I open to God’s voice; am I willing to receive truth from ‘unconventional’ sources?”

As we enter a new year, let’s take the time to discern truth, to listen to God and others, to carefully consider our sources. Let’s help truth prosper.

*SONG: Search Me, O God*

*PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, show me ways I hinder the spread of truth. Help me be wise and careful with the information I gather and share. I want truth to prosper in my life.*

—Paula Hampton

*BIBLE READING: Isaiah 26:3-4; Romans 15:13*

I've been on a journey toward trusting more fully for more than 21 years. I know the exact date, because it's the day our oldest daughter, Kelsey, came into our lives. Just home from the hospital, I sat on our somewhat tattered sofa holding my newborn. Tears began to flow uncontrollably. I felt overwhelmed by the responsibility I held in my arms, the powerful surge of love that pulsed through me. *Can I do this parenting thing? I wondered. Can I teach her all she needs to know, love her enough, be patient, weather the ups and downs of teenage years and any other challenges that come our way?*

I didn't know then what I know now: That every day with a child is a day of releasing her or him into God's care. It's a journey of trust.

About a year ago, Kelsey called home from college. "Mom, don't freak out," she said. "But I want to do a study abroad program next fall. In Cairo. Egypt." My mind went back to that night on the sofa, the night of overwhelming emotions. I thought about all the release points in between: weeks at camp, school field trips, learning to drive, heading off to college. *God, you love her more than I do, and I don't want to hinder what you might want to do in Kelsey's life. Take care of her, Lord. Help me release her into your keeping, help me to trust your goodness.*

As we begin a new year, perhaps God is speaking to you about trusting him more fully in some area of your life. Let go. Let God work in his good way.

*SONG: Trusting Jesus*

*PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, you know me inside and out. Help me to release to you my fears. I want to trust you more fully.*

—Paula Hampton