

# Small Things



Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalm 46:10 NKJV

AS I WRITE THIS THE NEWS IS FULL OF MANY BIG THINGS:

- Israel is at war with the Hamas-led Palestinians, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- A series of terrorist bombs have killed at least 200 commuters in India.
- Russia is easing back into a totalitarian state.
- Wildfires burn out-of-control in the western United States.
- The war against world-wide terror is succeeding, but slowly—and bloodily.

The headlines each day are filled to overflowing with instances of man's inhumanity. Today it is far too easy to kill, to rape, to swindle, to corrupt. People seem to regard each other as utterly replaceable—in the same way they regard spare parts for their vehicle: if something breaks, just throw it away and buy another. People—unique, God-imaged individuals—have become, sadly, expendable.

Even on the more positive side, we have become a society of individuals bent on outracing everyone else. Our technology helps us perform two, three, four tasks at once—all at lightning speed. We can instantly be in contact with people on the other side of the world; we can read or view the news *as it happens*; we can “be” anywhere we like, at any time of the day or night, via the Internet, cell phone, or satellite TV.

Family members are so far-flung, each moving at top speed, that it is a stretch even to call them, collectively, a “family,” for they are so infrequently in the same room together. Even as parents bemoan the fast and frantic pace of their children, they sign them up for more activities, more after-school events—and buy them ever-newer mobile phones for keeping “in touch.”

## What Happened?

We are surrounded by big things—big events, big people making loud and frantic noises. We are moving through life, from one big thing to the next, at breakneck speed. And all the while missing the small things.

Small things today have become insignificant. They have become expendable. *No time for that! No time! Gotta keep moving!* And at the end of the day—if we ever do reach the end of a day—we scratch our head and wonder, *What happened? Where did it all go? I want to spend time with my husband, but we have become disconnected. I want to spend time with my kids, but they are now adults—and gone.*

*I want to spend time with my God, but I no longer know where to find Him.*

God can indeed be found in the big things, but more often He is found in the small things, the quiet things, the small moments that are missed by modern, busy, fast-paced people today.

## A Goldfinch

A few days ago I parked the water wagon behind the house to refill it for watering the garden. I ran the hose into the sixty-five gallon tank, turned on the water, and sat myself down on a nearby step to wait for the tank to fill.

In just a few moments a male goldfinch landed on the edge of the birdbath that was just a few feet away. The feathers of the diminutive male goldfinch are a brilliant yellow. They are a beautiful, delicately crafted bird, and, parenthetically, the Iowa State Bird. Goldfinches are not uncommon in our area; they feed on the thistles that grow wild in the fields, and they frequent the salt block we have set out for the deer. But I had never before been so close to one.

Sitting there, I realized that I had not moved since taking my seat, so the finch didn't even know I was there. It happily drank and bathed in the water while I remained motionless, enjoying the delicate beauty of the bird. If I had held some thistle seed in a motionless, outstretched hand, it probably would have helped itself.

It was a rare experience, and one that would never have occurred had I not been perfectly quiet and still. If I had sat myself down and immediately flipped open a cell phone to chat with a friend, I would have missed it.

## Oases of Communion

Sitting there, watching this tiny jewel of a bird, I realized that here was God, in a small golden bird perched on the rim of our birdbath. Had I not paused for a moment in the bigger thing of watering the garden during a dry time, I would have missed Him altogether. I would have missed the small but precious thing of a quiet moment of communion with His glory.

To be sure, the garden needed watering. It needed that water desperately. I had to do it. But because in the midst of all that importance and activity I stopped, for even a moment, I was favored by God's beautiful grace.

We all have big things in our lives. We all have things that are important, that require our attention and activity. But when we never pause for the small things—those fragile and fleeting oases of heavenly communion—our connection to God begins to atrophy. Eventually it will dry up and blow away from disuse. And for the tyranny of the temporal moment, we will have bargained away sweet, heavenly moments with Him. ds1

## a Still, Small Voice

Elijah was feeling rather sorry for himself.

And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

1 Kings 19:9-10 NKJV

So the Lord decided to have a little chat with His whimpering prophet.

Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire **a still small voice**. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19:11-13 NKJV (emphasis added)

God revealed Himself in "a still small voice"—a "very little thing."

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*Speak, Lord, in the stillness,  
While I wait on Thee;  
Hushed my heart to listen,  
In expectancy.*

*For the words Thou speakest,  
They are life indeed;  
Living bread from heaven,  
Now my spirit feed!*

*Speak, Thy servant heareth,  
Be not silent, Lord;  
Waits my soul upon Thee  
For the quickening word.*

*Speak, O blessed Master,  
In this quiet hour;  
Let me see Thy face, Lord,  
Feel Thy touch of Power.*

*All to Thee is yielded,  
I am not my own;  
Blissful, glad surrender,  
I am Thine alone.*

*Fill me with the knowledge  
Of Thy glorious will;  
All Thine own good pleasure  
In Thy child fulfill.*

E. May Grimes