

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2010

Mission Tuesday #83



I have been in pain most of this week. I have had a "kink" in my neck/shoulder, and it has been difficult for me to stay positive and encouraging as it has bothered me all week. I don't like pain. I like to feel healthy, normal and well. I don't like to have something "wrong with me."

But, I have to say, having this pain has helped me to see things from a different perspective this week. Through it, God has opened my eyes to the pain others may be experiencing. How many of our Mission of Hope friends deal with some sort of pain, whether it's physical, emotional, mental, etc. every day of their lives? How many deal with a mental illness that forces them to act differently in situations than maybe you and I would? How many of them just struggle in getting out of bed in the morning because of depression? How many are so overcome with fear, guilt, or the pain of the past, that they just can't cope with life on a daily basis? How many see no end in their situation? How many can't conquer the debilitating hold an addiction has on them? How many do struggle with physical pain, and that alone makes them cranky and unfriendly? Do we really ever put ourselves in someone else's shoes...to try to see life from where they are coming from?

We experienced some different types of behaviors this week at Mission of Hope. As I shared with someone in an email correspondence, we deal with real people who have real life issues. Not all come from a background like you or I. Not all see things the way you and I may see them. Not all may be having a great day like you or I. Like I mentioned above, different issues come into play with different people. For example, if I was in pain all the time like I have been this week, I may not be the happiest of persons, and the pain could possibly get so bothersome that I could lash out at someone who

really didn't deserve that. All because of my real life issues. By no means are our issues that we deal with excuses for behaving poorly. Not at all. However not all people know how to deal with them. But the good news is, at Mission of Hope, many times they are given the opportunity to learn how to.

One of my Mission friends suffers with neuropathy. I looked up what neuropathy is and it's a disease of the nervous system, generally in the cranial or spinal area. She is in pain most of the time. But you could never tell it by looking at her. She has a smile on her face most of the time and helps us each week with deliveries. She tells me all the time she loves me. :) I can't imagine being in pain all day and all night. She trusts God, and prays for Him to take this pain away, and asks Him to bring good out of it all. She's an inspiration to me and to many others.

Another of our Mission friends had a one-on-one conversation with me this week. He and I had a serious confrontation a few months ago, due to his behavior. We asked him to take a time out for a few weeks from the Mission because of that. Our conversation this week allowed me to see just a little more of a glimpse of his life and what he deals with. It also allowed me to see how to help with him better in the future. I don't remember his exact words, but he started saying something like, "I didn't know you were so nice. When I first met you, my first impression of you wasn't good." (That was the day we had our confrontation.) I told him that I could understand that, and I felt the same way about him. :) He said he didn't even know my name, so I told him. He went on to say something like, "When someone gets in my face about something, I get defensive and I become someone who I'm not. I did it that day with you." He also said he has to keep his defense up "on the streets" because he needs to be the "tough one." I began to understand why he sometimes acts the way he does. I cherished that conversation with him. We were both able to understand each other a little better. :)

Life is different for our friends at the Mission. I wish more people could see and understand that to be able to relate to them a little better, and to maybe not judge them so quickly.

I was also able to be a part of a blessing yesterday! I've mentioned before about our elderly friend who has been homeless for years now, and who we've been working

trying to find him a place to live before the weather turns too cold. Tom and I took our friend to visit an assisted living home which had a room available. In my mind, it would be perfect for him! It was clean, comfortable, smelled wonderful, and they would provide most of the things he would need. I was SO excited for him! He said he wanted to think about it, and give his decision next week. He is one to not rush into anything. I pray he makes the decision God wants him to make. It was so wonderful to be a part of that process yesterday! I think it blessed me more than it did him! :)

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Being in pain this week has not been fun for me. But if God is using that pain and is working good out of it for me to see and better understand the different pains of our Mission friends, then I would say it has all been worth it. I'm thankful God is teaching me through it, giving me more compassion for the least, the lost, and the last.

God's blessings,

Julie