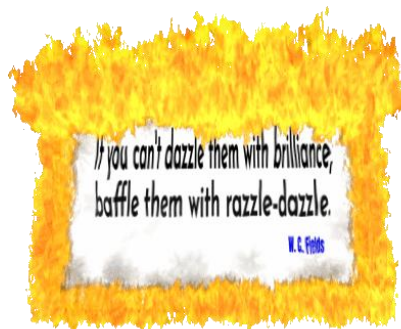


The dogs were playing on the deck this morning. The spring air was so invigorating. As they carried that energy back into the house, they ran from room to room chasing each other time and time again. I laughed, as I watched them. Suddenly, out of nowhere I said, "Wow! You guys are definitely full of razzle dazzle this morning!".

Razzle dazzle! I couldn't remember the last time I used those words. Where did this come from? I had to look this phrase up just to verify It meant what I thought it meant. It did! The meaning according to Oxford Languages Dictionary is "noisy, showy, and exciting activity and display designed to attract and impress."

My spirit reacted to that quickly as I thought of the modern "church". So much of what we see today is razzle-dazzle. It is meant to attract and impress people in order to gather a following. It ought not to be that way. It is the spirit of religion.

W. C. Fields once said, "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with razzle-dazzle". How fitting. If you can't wow them with the real thing, provide a shiny substitute. The basic principle of religion is "self". Satan set up his counterfeit kingdom in the earth. It is Babylon. We are called out of Babylon. We are called out of self. We are called to die daily so Jesus might live in and through us to touch the world.



Apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors are not meant to build ministries for themselves, but are called to raise up mature saints so Jesus can place them where He desires. Mature saints, as the Ekklesia, are sent forth into the world to show forth Jesus. If Jesus is lifted up, all men will come. We are not to be lifted up. Self is not to be lifted up.

Leadership gifts are not meant to be lifted up. They are meant to lead people to Jesus not just for salvation, but to hear His voice and do what He desires. Maturity requires saints hear the voice of the Lord themselves and discern the Holy Spirit verses spirits of the world. Mature saints are to be released, not clasped like some precious token of self-worth in the hands of the leaders.

Spiritual gifts, such as healing, prophecy, etc. are not gifts to razzle-dazzle a crowd and keep them dependent on the show and coming back for more. They are to show us the mercy and love our heavenly Father has for us. They are to draw attention to the God of the universe not the person using the gift provided by the Holy Spirit. They should be happening every day wherever we go whether to work or play.

When we are drawn to God, when He is our focus, we become aware with a very strong spiritual sense how GOOD our Heavenly Father really is! That is the goal of the five gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus. They lead us to God when we don't know the way. They teach us to seek for Him and to know when we find Him. They teach us and show us the way to hear the voice of our Lord. They teach us what it means to hear and obey.

We need to find God, even when at any time He is not far from us.

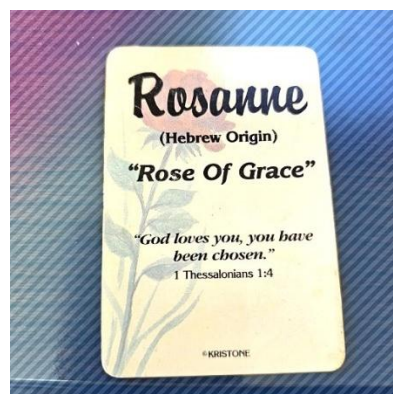
This was so that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grasp for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist [that is, in Him we actually have our being], as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' Acts 17:27, 28 (AMP)

You are fair and righteous in everything you do, and your love is wrapped into all your works. You draw near to those who call out to you, listening closely, especially when their hearts are true. Every godly one receives even more than what they ask for. For you hear what their hearts really long for, and you bring them your saving strength. Psalms 145:17-19 (TPT)

As we seek God, He shows us His nearness all the time. We just have to learn to recognize Him. That is the true work of the five gifts, not razzle dazzle. When you are aware that He is near you and watching you, you look for signs of it. When you are constantly aware of His love for you as His child and He longs to show you His love, you see things you never saw before. People will call you crazy. I don't care. I know in my heart it is my Father showering love on me.

Once, it was my birthday and I was feeling alone. My family was all in another state. As a hobby in my spare time, I went to rummage sales and bought books. I would then bundle and sell on Ebay. On this birthday I was going through the books to make sure there were no missing pages or torn pages when a card fell from the pages.

The card had my middle name on it and it was spelled the way I spell it. I had never seen one spelled like that. My middle name is Rosanne. God was listening to my heart that day, and He gave me the best birthday present ever. I read it and tears came to my eyes. God was showing me His love for me as my Father. Rose of grace, I was chosen by God for a purpose.



This last Saturday I had another “God showing love to me” event. There was a neighborhood garage sale not too far from where I live. I decided to go and see what I could see. I came to the first house, which ended up being the only place I stopped, and I walk into the garage. The first table had a bundt pan for two dollars. I grabbed it. The second table had a Christmas ornament with JOY on it. Suddenly, I was aware I had been set up!

I collect ornaments that have the word JOY on them, because of Joy Mountain Ranch. Anything with the words JOY brings my attention automatically to God. The bundt pan, of course! It was on my wish list but had been one of those things that I didn't know how much I would use it and debated within myself if I really needed it. Thus, I talked myself out of it every time I thought about buying new in a store! But, who could turn down the item for \$2?

As, I paid for the items, the owner told me that the pan was brand new, never been used. She had bought with good intentions, but just didn't ever use it. My heavenly Father found a way to shower His love on me and it made me cry. He gave me a brand new bundt pan for two dollars! He put that JOY ornament nearby so I would realize it was a gift from Him.

Now, you might try to convince me this was just a coincidence, but you will never convince me. These things happen to me too often to believe it is anything but my Father showing me His love. He wants to do the same for you.

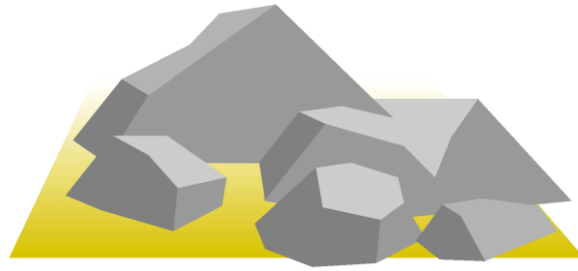
Over my life I have become acutely aware of how God has to orchestrate events in order just to produce one result. For instance, He had to convince a woman to buy a pan she would never use, even when she was probably not aware that it was His doing. He then had to convince her to have a rummage sale on the day that God knew I would venture out into the land of sales and to place that bundt pan there even though it had never been used. He had to convince her to put a price on it that He knew I would think was a bargain. God is like that!

One time I was walking on a walking path in the Black Hills of South Dakota near my home. It was an abandoned railroad bed. The rails had been removed and the path smoothed for walkers. I was praying about a message I was preparing to deliver in Kenmare, ND in a couple of weeks and I wanted to hear what God wanted to speak to the people.

As I walked, I found myself thinking, “I will walk for an hour and then rest for a bit before walking back”. I began to pray for there to be some rocks in the shade that I could sit on after I had walked an hour. Suddenly, the thought came. Was God really going to lift some rocks and move them just for me to have some shade to rest? The enemy was trying to convince me that was a stupid prayer and it would never happen. But, with God anything is possible.

As I walked and it got closer to the hour, I had not seen any rocks in the shade when suddenly there was one sort of in the shade, but not really. I was tempted but I heard God say, “are you really going to settle for second-best?” Besides, the hour was not quite up. A little bit later, I turned a corner and there was not one rock but many in the

shade. I could choose! I checked the time and the hour was up. I thanked God for the lesson in not settling.



As I meditated on the events, I found myself thinking about all the things that had to happen in order for God to answer this prayer. Yes, He could have picked up a rock on that day and moved it into the place I wanted it to be, but He didn't. Instead, centuries before He heard the prayer I was going to pray on this day and He set things up to answer that prayer. He had already made arrangements for what I needed a long time ago. In His heart, it was already done waiting for me to arrive in my day and pray.

He created the rocks in the right place knowing exactly how far my legs would be able to travel in an hour, which would be substantially less than a 6-foot man with long legs. He later designed a railroad to run along that path knowing that one day it would no longer be needed and it would be designed as a walking path. He moved me to a place, so I would be near it when I wanted to pray and prepare a message to His people. All of that was planned so that one little prayer could be answered.

To think He does that for all His children, even when most aren't even aware that He is working behind the scenes in their behalf.

That is really what faith is all about, faith in His love. He tells us that without faith we can't please Him.

But without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (AMP)

God REWARDS those who really seek Him! What are the rewards? Oh, they are many, but the greatest reward is when He shows you how much He loves you, and that He is a good, good Father! He will lead us to an understanding of that love and sometimes He will test us, not for the purpose of our failure, but so we can understand and believe in the depth of His love. When we understand the true depth of the love our Heavenly Father has for us, the razzle dazzle will not satisfy anymore (if it ever really did).

We are sometimes given opportunity to doubt, so that our faith may be strengthened. We must mature until our faith is strong. It is what we do with those moments of doubt that define us. God is still faithful and still loving, but He desires that our faith be so strong we can move mountains. Believe me, I am preaching to the choir.

Here is an illustration of what I am speaking about. One time, years ago when my children were very young, my husband wanted a leather sewing machine. He made things from leather as a hobby, and it was one of his heart's desires to have a sewing machine. Buying new was extremely expensive. We didn't have much money in those days, but we were learning to live by faith. God did not disappoint. Week after week we put a little bit aside to buy one.

Then, one day there was an ad in the paper for an upcoming auction in a town about 30 miles from where we lived. There was a leather sewing machine at that auction. We had managed to save \$300, not a lot. That in itself would be a miracle to buy a heavy-duty industrial style leather sewing machine for that amount. We had prayed in faith believing.

The story I tell you now has many lesson points on faith. I will mention these points as I tell the story.

We went to the auction. My husband started talking to someone else who was looking at the machine, an older gentleman. My husband ended up telling his story of why he wanted the machine and why it was so important to him. He also told him he didn't have much money to get it, so it was going to take a miracle. He did not tell him how much he had to spend.

As the auction began, he found this older gentleman bidding against him. He had no idea that he was interested in buying the machine, as well. There was one other bidder. The bid got to around \$290 which was the bid from the elderly gentleman. The other person had previously stopped bidding.

My husband bid \$300 as we were praying and the bidding stopped. We got the sewing machine for the exact amount we had to spend. The elderly gentleman later told us that he wanted it but really didn't need it and the story my husband had told him touched his heart, so he stopped bidding.



Lesson one: You never know who God is going to use to help make your dream a reality. So, listen and look for opportunities to befriend people and talk to them. Let God direct your every step.

Lesson two: It doesn't matter if others are Christians or not, God will use His ways and His methods to get something to you. He can stop the bidding on an auction item at just the right moment without people realizing God had something to do with it.

Now comes the important part and the tricky part. Remember the enemy does not want you to get something from God because he realizes it will only cause your love

for God and your faith in Him to grow stronger. The enemy will try anything to stop it and make you give up and doubt. God will use those opportunities to test our faith and to teach us. He wants us strong.

We spent a good deal of time tying that sewing machine to the rail of an open snowmobile trailer. It had to be tied down good for the ride home. It was getting dark by the time we left the auction site with the trailer and sewing machine. We drove very slow using our flasher lights.

Then we heard this horrible sound of something metal hitting the pavement. We pulled over and discovered one of the rails had come loose on the trailer and the sewing machine had come loose and scattered in pieces all over the highway. Here we were presented with an opportunity to doubt or believe God.

We unhooked the trailer and turned the Blazer around so we could shine the headlights on the highway. We had to pick up all the pieces in hopes we could find someone to put it back together again, that is if all the pieces were intact.

My husband was devastated. First thoughts, how could God do this? How could God give you something, and then take it away? Well, the truth of the matter is, He could and He has taken in my own life but not without reason. Always He does what is best for us and He does it out of a heart of love, but that is a story for another time. I instantly knew by the Spirit of God, this was not the work of God. We were new to understanding faith and the enemy did not want us to grow anymore in believing God. But God had different plans.

I thanked God that He was working this situation for our good and if this machine could not be rebuilt there would be another better one for us. I told Him I knew His love for us was great and He would prove it. I didn't know how or when. I hoped it would be soon, because this was not easy on my husband.

Lesson three: Faith is not always easy, in fact it is rarely easy

Lesson four: The enemy does try to steal from us, including our faith and with that our joy.

There was a repair shop in our town where my husband would take his boots for repair. They had leather sewing machines, so my husband decided to go talk to them about who repaired their sewing machines. He found out there was one man from back east who made his way across the country once a YEAR repairing these machines. This man was due to be in the store in a couple of weeks.

Lesson five: God is always on time and has already set in motion the events necessarily to answer our prayers even when we can't see them or even know about them.

My husband left his name and number with the store owner to give to the repairman when he came to the store.

A couple of weeks later, the repair man came to the store. He did the work he needed to do there and left the store. Suddenly, the store owner remembered my

husband's note. He found it and went running down the street to give it to the repairman.

Lesson six: It is a marvel to look back and see how God works in our behalf and how there could have been failure at any of the points, had not God been involved.

Lesson two was also illustrated again. God will use anyone or any thing to get us our answer.

Two days later the repairman came to our place to look at the sewing machine. He told us the bad news was he could not repair the machine here and it would take him a long time to know if it could even be repaired. He would have to take it with him.

The good news? This particular sewing machine had been patented by his dad and he wanted it, no matter what it looked like. His offer was a different, more modern sewing machine that worked plus \$150 cash. So, we made money on the deal. We didn't even know if the machine purchased at the auction even actually worked. I am convinced it didn't and God orchestrated this so He could get a machine that did work into our hands.

Lesson seven: Never give up on your promises when you know they are from God even when it looks like things are going in the opposite direction.

Lesson eight: God loves us so much, He will orchestrate many events and use many different people just to get us the answer to our prayer. His love is blended into everything He does for us! Understanding that fact will increase our faith exponentially

God, everyone sees your goodness, for your tender love is blended into everything you do. Psalm 145: 9 (TPT)

In my first book, *The Mountain Belongs to the Remnant*, the entire first chapter is dedicated to understanding the love of God. The entire book is about being an overcomer in this life. There are three basic keys to overcoming: love, obedience, and faith. (1 John 5:1-5)

Until we realize how much God truly loves us, we cannot love Him back to the extent we must. In this same chapter of 1 John, we are commanded to love God's other children, as well. We cannot love as we should until we first love God. There is no unity without love. We cannot love God until we understand His love for us. Faith only comes out of a heart of love. Obedience for a saint is only done out of love, not out of fear, or expectations. It all goes back to understanding the Father's love.



This is the message the five gifts given to the Ekklesia by Jesus should not only be teaching, but living out as an example. If what they are doing is not being done out of

both a strong sense of love from the Father, but also a love for the saints, it is not what God planned for His Kingdom. We will only become the true Ekklesia who loves righteousness and hates wickedness, who walks in unity and love, when we understand and walk in these things.

The examples I have given of the love of the Father being demonstrated as we walked out faith are small in comparison to where God is leading us today. It will not be accomplished through the razzle dazzle of the prophetic-in crowd of today. It will not be accomplished through the hell-bent antics of the apostle-in crowd who believe they can whip the “church” into shape.

These things ahead of us will only be accomplished as these gifts take their place in leading saints to the Father and His love, leading them to Jesus and showing them how to hear His voice and trust it, leading them to Holy Spirit who teaches and trains them every day into maturity. Our teachings are for the purpose of equipping the saints to rely on God, not us. The saints are not ours, they belong to God and He loves them with a fierceness many do not understand. But we will!

How can I say the world is going to get better and better, when it looks like it is getting worse with every day that passes? How can I say, we are headed to a time when there will be unity and a coming together of the saints without jealousy and strife and jostling for position? How can I say leaders will be leaders and not managers and dictators controlling everything? Because my God has promised it and I believe Him in spite of everything I see to the contrary. It is written in the books that He gave us to show us His love and His ways.

I can have the faith to believe, because my Father has taught me how great His love is for me and the rest of His creation. I will obey because I know His heart and He desires us to experience His best.

The razzle dazzle is not going to stop until the saints say no more and stop following it and stop participating. It is not going to stop until there is a hunger in God's people to see and know His love. His love is with His people who have taken the time to get to know Him and follow Him with a whole heart.

The saints will lead people to Jesus, will touch people with healing power, will show people the love of the Father, will provide the answers to strategic situations every where they go, will set people free, will demonstrate the love and power of their God in every area of society drawing attention to the Father and His love, not to themselves. That is the Ekklesia. That is what is going to change nations. That is what is going to display the beautiful glory of our Lord and it is not razzle dazzle.

If the answer was the razzle dazzle, do you not think we would live in a completely different world today? If razzle dazzle was working, would we not have turned our world upside down like the first century saints did? God doesn't need razzle dazzle. He needs mature saints who love Him with a passion and understand His heart and His ways. These carry the glory of the Lord within them and they do what their Lord wants out of a heart of love and respect. They have left the temptation of the razzle dazzle behind them. Do you know who you are?

How great is our God! There's absolutely nothing his power cannot accomplish, and he has infinite understanding of everything. Psalm 147:5 (TPT)

It is He, and He alone we seek! We will not be satisfied with anything less! Arise, saints! It is your hour!

