**Faith and Birthdays-Martha Rodman  
September 1, 2022**

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***The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3: 22-23 ESV***

**It came last week, just like every year: my birthday. I turned seventy-three. My body has been telling me it is old. My soul is telling me not to listen to my body. My spirit is telling me to trust in the Lord for His purpose and His plan for my body, my soul and my spirit.**

**I came across a scripture during my birthday week. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, was telling them of troubles and difficulties they had endured in the province of Asia. *We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die.*Wow, I haven’t had those troubles, but as he goes on he says: *But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.* 2 Corinthians 1:8-9**

**What about you? Have you gone through things that have made you stop relying on yourself and learned to rely on God? Either by decisions you have made (like a new job or new relationship?) or circumstances that just came your way…like a diagnosis or accident? Some are so big, we don’t seem to have a choice—things are out of our control and all we can do is pray. Part of the good that He works for good when we go through trials and difficulties in this life, is that we learn to lean on Him and that He is trustworthy.**

**I admit, I’m still learning to go to him first, instead of last, in so many areas of my life. When I was younger and stronger, I really didn’t rely on Him much for physical strength, but at my current age, I need to.**

**I have found that when we go to him first, instead of last, for our wisdom, strength and purpose, things change. I change. We change. If we are going to learn to lean and rely on him, we must trust him. This is not always easy, is it?**

**Next week, I will start a new journey of trust and reliance. I am committed to teach four wonderful elementary age girls chemistry and physics on Tuesdays. My Life Group, which I also lead, meets at my home on Wednesday evenings, and I will begin to teach at our fledgling School of Ministry on Thursdays. I am excited about each of these endeavors. However, my body is challenging me right now. I struggle at times with allergies and asthma, which can leave me tired and feeling drained. I am choosing to trust He will give me a rhythm of grace to accomplish all my hand will be doing. Deuteronomy 33:25 *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be.* NKJV This is a scripture I have leaned on for many years, and I believe it will carry me through this season of once again learning to lean and rely on the Lord for His strength, wisdom and grace. My past has found Him faithful, and I know my present will, too, as I learn to lean.**

**I also found another meaningful scripture I am leaning upon in 2 Corinthians. *I will gladly spend myself and all I have for you. 2 Corinthians 12:15.*The rest of this scripture is difficult to read, and I am sure it was difficult for Paul to live out. *Even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me.*As we do our best to rely on and lean on the Lord and His ways, the outcome may not be what we expect. That means we must continue to follow and trust Him. Paul endured more than any of us can imagine, and yet he carried on. He ran his race until the end, and he ran it with joy. That’s my goal! I choose to spend my energy and focus as a teacher this year—trusting it will affect the lives of these students for His Kingdom’s sake.**

**I am glad I had another birthday. I am glad I have another year, to learn how to lean on and rely on Him. He is always worthy of our trust. I know I will need his mercies every morning, and I can trust His faithfulness, so can you. I can’t wait to see how He strengthens me this year! We walk by faith and not by sight, right? This post has too many “I’s” in it. My first leaning lesson: it’s about the young students, the Life Group Members and the School of Ministry students. As focus on them, then strength will come.**

***Father, I ask that you help us learn to lean on you. Please do not let pride hinder us from trusting you. Teach us to lean on you in every area of our lives. In Jesus’ Name, amen.***