



ZWTF

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2012 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

Got contrast? Thank God for it.

by Rebecca Tonn



My husband frequently speaks of the spiritual principle of contrasts: In order to know joy, we have to experience sorrow; in order to appreciate fellowship with God, we had to be separated from God (“And you, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension ...” Colossians 1:21-22); and in my case, in order to totally, deeply, all the way to the core of my soul be able to trust and appreciate a loving husband, I had to (formerly) be married to a man who physically beat on me and psychologically traumatized me—for 10.5 years, no less.

Three years and 25 days after God gave me the courage and wherewithal to leave *that* man, God introduced me to a new one. I wasn’t looking for this man—on the contrary, I’d told God that I could easily be happy and single the rest of my life. If God thought

I needed someone in my life, then He would have to practically drop him in my path. As in, I couldn’t avoid meeting him, and it would have to be ludicrously obvious that this was the right man for me. (Suffice it to say, that’s precisely what happened, on June 26, 2010, when I attended a Scriptural conference, and Martin Zender “just happened” to be one of the speakers.)

After all, it’s far worse to be lonely within a marriage than as a single person. Life doesn’t get much lonelier than having to barricade your bedroom door at night with a heavy dresser, while hoping and praying the creature you’re married to doesn’t break *this* particular door down, in order to throw you to the tile floor and slam your head repeatedly into it.

No, thanks. Been there, been through that. I’d just as soon come home to my own, tiny apartment, knowing it’s quiet and ... SAFE. Four letters have never been so comforting and simultaneously sexy. Safety is paramount. If you or a loved one has never been abused (for which I thank God, and you ought to count your blessings), then it’s difficult to grasp the thrill of being safe.

God, in His loving, sovereign wisdom, knew that unless I endured the contrast of abuse, I would never have appreciated (much less wept with joy over) the glory of protection.

Most people take safety—in relationships and in their own homes—for granted.

Not me.

Today, I was moved, once again, to tears. (No, not after being choked to the brink of passing out while taking a bath at 10:30 p.m., and then slapped 30 times after I failed to lose consciousness.) This time, tears flowed because of the tender, loving ministrations of my husband, Martin Zender. Each day, every day, many times a day, I thank God for Martin. My heart fills with

gratitude and joy. Can you say, “Principle of contrast”?

Martin treats me as the apostle Paul told men to treat their wives: “As Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for it” (Ephesians 5:25). Martin walks, lives, and breathes that verse, pondering what he can do to make my life better or easier, including doing dishes every day, leaving hidden love notes around our apartment, or waiting patiently while I try to do one-last-thing before we go somewhere.

Martin never yells, never belittles or criticizes me, never gets angry with me.

Our heavenly Father knew that with my background I could not be with a man who so much as raised his voice. Martin never does. I would crumple inside. I would have flashbacks and such fright that I would shut down to him. Emotional walls grow thick and stubborn after years of anxiety and fear.

Instead, my heart opens up to my husband a little more each day. My heart knows I’m safe, now, and so I’m blooming as an orchid in springtime. I may look bold and confident, but inside I’m delicate—not eager to be hurt again.

After an intimate time together, today, my husband looked deep into my eyes and quietly said, “I love everything about you.”

Instantly, I burst into tears. Tears of relief, tears of joy, tears of gratitude.

I know he means it. Daily, Martin proves it.

Husbands, be loving your wives according as Christ also loves the ecclesia, and *gives Himself up* for it, in order that He should be *hallowing it, cleansing it* in the bath of the water ... in order that He should be presenting to Himself a glorified ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless. Thus, husbands also ought to be loving their own wives as their own bodies. He who is loving his own wife is loving himself. For no one at any time hates his own flesh, but is *nourishing and cherishing it*, according as Christ also the ecclesia. ... Moreover, you also, individually, each be loving his own wife thus, as himself.

—Ephesians 5:25-30, 33

Finally, I know what it means to be loved and cherished.

Thank God for contrasts.

—*Rebecca*



With Martin’s son, Luke.
Gunnison, CO.



Our grandson, Wesley.
Yuba City, CA.



Martin & my mom, Mary.
Chico, CA.



Hiking above Colorado Springs.