

Sisters for Yah

Empty Treasures

(By Sister Deborah Reed)

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," Matthew 6:19-21.

A few years ago, I awakened to the realization that much of my time was spent on “stuff”—picking up stuff, sorting stuff, cleaning stuff, repairing stuff, storing stuff, and so on. How much of this stuff was useful and necessary and

how much was purely redundant or simply “eye candy?” Did I really need three can openers or four green plastic containers? And what about the souvenirs collected on family vacations or those garage sale knickknacks that were displayed on any available shelf or nook and needed constant dusting? I was a slave to my “treasures.” Could this time have been spent in other, more important, endeavors?

As a child, my family would have been considered poor by today's standards. Of course, we never considered ourselves such, since most families at the time were as bereft of possessions as were we. My father was an army sergeant, so we moved often and, by necessity, had few belongings. My mother and I would clean our duplex apartment or small house in the afternoon — everything we owned dusted, shined, and put in its place.

Today, after years of accumulating things, I have trouble just cleaning one room thoroughly in a whole day. Multi-tasking isn't as easy as it once was, but I realize that I just have too much stuff. My possessions have become a burden.

In Matthew 11:28, Yahshua said, *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* While He clearly referred to the mental and physical burdens we carry throughout our lives—worries, griefs, regrets, illnesses, and other troubles — He also may have meant material burdens that we spend our lives yearning for, and chasing after, that once possessed, burden us and wear us down. (Continued on next page)

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When my mother lay dying, in compliance with her wishes, the nurse gently removed the wedding ring from her finger to give to me. Mom left this world with nothing but the hospital gown she was wearing. In the end, the possessions that she had accumulated and cherished throughout her life were meaningless. Most of her belongings were given away or sold for pennies on the dollar. Aside from her ring and a few other mementos I kept, all that she left behind of significance were the memories of her smile, kind words, and love for us.

Have we lost our chance at peace and joy through our pursuit of pleasures and possessions? Have we equated happiness with acquisition? Has our nation's prosperity made us a better people, or have we turned our faces from His Law and His great love and lost our chance at true bliss? Has our country's great wealth given us more strength, integrity, and moral purpose, or have we become weak-willed, selfish, and morally corrupt?

We've been told that the American lifestyle is not sustainable. As other countries also acquire the technology to become more prosperous, the natural world is becoming more polluted and resources are becoming depleted at an alarming rate. Because of our greed, we are destroying His beautiful and bountiful creation, and ourselves in the process.

Since women most often do the family shopping for food, clothing, and other items, we are in a unique position to practice temperance and frugality. Each time we spend money for goods or services, we should question the reason or necessity for the purchase. Is it something we truly need or is it only a temporary want? Can we do without it, or find an alternative that is less expensive? Better yet, can we use something we already have for the same purpose?

The WWII expression comes to mind, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." Through careful choices, and using some restraint, we can achieve a simpler and less chaotic existence, preserving family and world resources. In the process, we may find more time for, and pleasure in, the important things—serving and enjoying our family, friends, neighbors, and most of all, our Father.

Yahweh is Always with us!

*Where can I go from
Your Spirit? Or where
can I flee from Your
presence? If I ascend
into heaven, You are
there; If I make my bed
in sheol, behold,
You are there.
If I take wings of the
morning, and dwell in
the uttermost parts of the
sea, even there Your
Hand shall lead me, and
your right Hand
shall hold me,
Psalm 139:7-10*



Natural Wonders

(By Sister Deborah Reed)

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And Elohim saw that it was good, Genesis 1:12.

Long, long ago, when children were still allowed, no, *made*, to walk home from school, my friends and I saw what looked like a round, green brain lying on the sidewalk. It was very hard, about the size of a softball and smelled like a lime. Since computers, cell phones, and iPads, hadn't been invented yet, we did what most children would have done at the time—we kicked it down the sidewalk until we tired of the game and left it to rot on someone's front yard. Had I known then that it was a hedgeapple — come from the Osage Orange tree, and is a natural insecticide — I probably still would have used it for a soccer ball.

Named after a regional Indian tribe, the wood of the Osage Orange tree is hard, heavy, tough, and durable. A small to medium sized tree displaying some very formidable thorns, it tolerates poor soil, extreme heat, and strong winds. It's no wonder, then, that pioneers in the Midwest region of our country planted the trees in rows, or hedges, as a natural fence in which to keep their livestock — hence the name of the tree's fruit, "hedgeapple." Today we have barbed wire, but wood from the Osage Orange is still used in making strong, sturdy fence posts that are known to outlast the barbed wire attached to them. Archery bows and furniture are but a few of the many products made from this prized wood.

It is the fruit of this tree, however, that I search out and gather each year in late September or early October. With the onset of autumn, spiders, crickets, water bugs, and a whole host of creepy, crawly critters decide to winter over in my house. They come en masse down the chimney, up the water pipes, under the doors, and through the window screens. I have found that these "round, green brains," or hedgeapples, are a natural and effective household insecticide. I place one in each room and two or three in the basement, out of the reach of children, setting them in coffee filter-lined cereal bowls—they do ooze sticky stuff which is a known skin irritant. A day or so later finds me vacuuming, sweeping, and wiping up dead bugs everywhere. The hedgeapples rot away in about a month or two (another reason to use coffee filter) but by then, we've had our first frost and bugs are no longer a problem.



Of course, there are skeptics who call all of this "folklore," if they're polite, and "baloney" if they're not. I remember one such person, a coach who came from suburbia to work at our rural school. It had been an especially abundant year, hedgeapple-wise, and I lugged two egg crates full of them to school to give away. Teachers, principals, secretaries, and janitors all eagerly snapped them up as many as they could carry. Mr. Coach scoffed at our quaint, if not ridiculous, notions, but I convinced him to take a couple home. A few days later, he called me aside and, with an incredulous whisper, told me that the closet in which he put both hedgeapples was now full of dead bugs! Hehe.



Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua
2963 County Road 233
Kingdom City, Missouri 65262

Main Line: 1-573-642-4100
Toll Free: 1-877-642-4101
Fax Line: 1-573-642-4104
Website: www.SistersForYah.org



Recipes

Refrigerator Oatmeal:

- 1 cup uncooked old fashioned oats
- 1 cup milk, any kind
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 3 T. honey

Optional toppings: Sliced bananas, berries, chocolates chips, or nuts

Mix first 4 ingredients. Cover and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, heat desired amount and top with your favorite toppings.



Super Healthy Asparagus Salad:

- 1 pound asparagus, cut in pieces and lightly steamed (be sure to discard tough, woody ends)
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 2 T. grated parmesan cheese
- 1 T. olive oil
- 2 t. lemon juice
- 1/4 t. Kosher salt, or to taste.



After lightly steaming the asparagus, allow it to cool. Mix all the ingredients. Refrigerate.

Fast and Yummy on-the-go Breakfast Sandwich:

- 1 English muffin, toasted and buttered
- One fried or scrambled egg
- 1 slice turkey bacon, or turkey sausage patty, cooked
- 1 slice cheese, your favorite.



Place all on the English muffin and broil, if desired, to melt the cheese. Serves one.