

SINGLES VIEWPOINT

by Lynda Stein

Hiding From Love



1:00 p.m. A bright sunny afternoon in Jerusalem — lying in the cool grass, staring into the deep blue sky watching a small parachute used by the Israeli military to measure wind velocity in the event of a chemical attack — wondering if she was going to live...or die. The trip to Israel had been more eventful than she had imagined. The threat of an Iraqi attack had pushed the government into placing gas masks in fallout shelters. A false air raid during a music rehearsal, a 15-jeep escort out of the Arab quarter and now, Arab dissidents were hurling stones over Western wall chanting, "Kill Americans! Kill Christians! Kill the Jews!" She fit each category.

A short distance from the Wailing Wall at Sultan's Pool, preparations were being made for an evening performance honoring Israelis and the new Russian immigrants. Gunshots and sirens from the terrorist attack could be heard. As fear raced through the international cast, they began dropping out of the evening's event.

Across from the outdoor theater was the wall of the old city. Her task for the program was to operate the show's spotlight located on top of a tall scaffolding — a direct shot for a sniper's bullet. Fear raced through her mind as she imagined her parents reading about the death of an American girl from a small midwest town, only to discover that it was their daughter. She was overwhelmed with the realization that even if she dropped out of the evening program, she could not be safe. The threat of chemical warfare made that point clear.

Instantly, life went through her head and heart as she passionately prayed, "I'm not yet ready to die; I've only just begun my life. I haven't allowed myself to experience love, and I haven't had a child. I haven't accomplished...."

As she poured her heart out to the Lord, she realized she had been hiding from love. A great peace drew over her. *God has taken me this far, she thought. If Jerusalem is where He plans to take me home, then so be it.*

Are you hiding from love and life? Is it going to take a near-death experience to wake you up and make you realize how short and valuable life is? Are you running away from what really is important to you, keeping a safe distance, never allowing yourself to love, live and experience?

Do you love someone and can't tell them because of built-up fear? Are you avoiding responsibilities due to low self-esteem? Are you waiting for a prince or princess to magically sweep you off your feet, waving a magic wand to happiness? Are you in hiding?

Usually when we stay in hiding we make it impossible for our friends and potential love interests to reach us. The Bible does direct us to guard our hearts and there is nothing wrong with being private. However, make sure your privacy isn't preventing you from being reached as an individual. Often, it can be the main source of loneliness.

There are other things we do to hide from even the simplest intimacy. We set our relationship standards so high that even Jesus, Himself, couldn't live up to our requirements. Does this sound familiar? Regarding love interests, he/she is perfect in personality/spiritual characteristics area, and I am attracted to them, but I want to marry a blond/brunette at least (?) years younger/older, etc.... In friendship interests, they should know how I feel about this situation; they're my friends. I shouldn't have to tell them!

To come out of hiding, begin to communicate what you're thinking and feeling with God, yourself, and the people you're relating to.

First, let's discuss our relationship with God. If you've

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had bad past relationships in any capacity, you'll probably have to make an extra effort to trust God. Often our relationship growth stops at our unresolved hurts. At the point of hurt, we make a conscious decision to go into hiding in the specific area in which we've been hurt. If the hurt came in your childhood, that's as far as you've grown in that area. Don't get overwhelmed. When you face the pain for what it is, catching up happens rapidly.

Not until we completely turn our pain over to God will healing come. Then we have to admit to ourselves we've been hurt, cry the tears, forgive and attempt to relearn proper healthy behaviors. During this stage it's important to be patient with yourself. Because in order to learn what works and what doesn't work, you have to establish relationships with people. Trust me, you will make mistakes.

As you muddle your way through the learning process, it's important to stay close to God. You'll need Him. There may be times when it'll feel as if He's the only One who understands.

It takes courage to come out of hiding. At the first step, you're going to feel as though the least little frown or cross word someone makes at you is a flashback into the past. At times, you may race back to your hiding nest, shake with fear, develop opinions about everyone you know, realize those opinions are keeping you away from people, regain courage and try again. But you must try again.

Do you have doubts? "...with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. "...fear not for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth..." Isaiah 54:4. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Isaiah 40:29. "A NEW heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26.

Hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants showed up for the outdoor concert that evening. The evening sky was jet black as the moon and stars brightly light the guests. Peace encompassed the music as it reached the heavenlies in praise. *God's protecting me*, she thought as she steadied the spotlight on the singer. *He's blanketing Himself around my heart and I am going to love again.*

Ms. Stein is a single adult serving the Lord through the Christian and secular market as an actress, director and teacher. She is also available for speaking engagements. For more information, call 629-3687 (Beeper).

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