

Hearing from our Friends
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I have been thinking about perspective lately in part because Steve and I had the privilege recently of hosting a Friend from Kenya. Elizabeth had never been on a plane before nor, probably, outside of Kenya. Her questions about our way of life encouraged me to, once again, look at my life with different eyes.

As we came home from the airport, Elizabeth wanted to know why there weren't people walking along the road; we explained that we live in an area that is so spread out that people need to drive to get where they are going. Next, she wanted to know "Where are the fences?" We were confused until she asked, "How do you protect your house without a fence around it?" I doubt that our explanations about security systems really helped her much. What really excited her was my washer and dryer. To think that she could wash and dry her clothes in less than two hours and pack them clean to take home was a delight. As the mother of five children (now grown) and a schoolteacher, I'm sure she had spent many hours washing clothes by hand during her life, so a washing machine was amazing to her. I have lived overseas so this kind of perspective is not new to me, but it's always good to be reminded.

Perspective is a good thing in my personal life as well. I am not a person who likes chaos or uncertainty. In fact, most new ideas presented to me are met with an emphatic "No!" After I've had time to think about it some, I often change my mind, but I still say "No" first. When I'm faced with a situation that feels challenging, I like to analyze it from every angle, think of every possible thing that could happen as a result of that challenge, and create at least five responses to each eventuality. It's nuts, and I know it, but I do it anyway. The good thing is that I am slowly learning to let God change my perspective; the time between my catastrophizing and my letting God change my perspective is slowly getting shorter.

When I let God get a word in edgewise, God has plenty to say about trusting in God's love and care. Two passages of Scripture especially speak to me when I need to be reminded of God's love. First is Psalm 139: no matter where I go or what happens to

me as I go, God is already there waiting for me with open arms.(My paraphrase.)

Second is Matthew 6: 25 – 34: God made the lilies and sparrows and cares for them; aren't you of greater value? So, trust God to care for you, too. And, while you're at it: don't borrow trouble from tomorrow because today has enough of its own. When you borrow trouble from tomorrow, you are blind to the joys and blessings of today. (My paraphrase.)

My letting go can be a problem, but God's faithfulness never fails. As Psalm 36:5 says, *"But your loyal love, Lord, extends to the skies: your faithfulness reaches the clouds."* And Matthew 11:28 says, *"Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest."* (Common English Bible)

There are many hymns that speak to this situation, but two of my favorites are "Day by Day" by Carolina Sandell Berg and "Great is Thy Faithfulness" by Thomas O. Chisholm. When I need to be reminded that a change of perspective would be helpful, these hymns and others like them help me remember God's deep love and faithfulness and my perspective changes from anxiety to peace.