

Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View

Dear Listener:

Thank you for stopping by for a visit at Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View podcast! To make it easy, you will find a transcript of each episode. I hope you enjoy the visit!

Episode 56 - Baby Needs New Shoes

Recently, I had a conversation with a friend. Her mom and dad passed away several years ago, and the Country Boy and I have taken her under our wings.

As we all do from time to time, she has been having a series of struggles lately. And these aren't just the kind that show up and are resolved over a few days. The struggles she is having have been ongoing for many years, she has no control over them, and periodically, a piece of them pop back up, and she is ready for a meltdown.

I feel her pain. We all have struggles that don't seem to go away. These are struggles we don't really have any control over, but are caused by outside influences or other people. They build and build and build, until we feel as if we could explode. If we could fix them, we would. If we could walk away from them, we would be putting on our tennis shoes. But we can't.

I wish I could share with you a way to get rid of these struggles altogether. But in most cases, there isn't one. Instead, we have to find ways to deal with them.

For the struggles in my life, I take a hard look at what is involved in them. Is it something I can fix? Then I do my best to fix it. Is it something I can control? Then I deal with it. But if I can't fix or control it, I still have to find a way to live with it, or it will eat me up inside.

It has taken years, but I finally found a way to alleviate most of the physical, mental, and emotional anxiety and stress that is the residual effect of my struggles.

The first step I take is to head to the prayer bench down by the pond. I take a few moments to focus my heart in prayer, and then let things start pouring out. I start with the first struggle, tell God what it is, and then hand it over to Him. At the same time, I visualize that struggle dropping like a stone into the pond and being drowned. From there, I do the same with every single one of my struggles, problems, and obstacles.

Once I have poured out all the nastiness inside, I then turn to Him with thanks for taking all of that off my shoulders and out of my heart. But I don't stop there.

The next thing I do is find 3 positive things I can focus on. I call this 'Baby Needs New Shoes'. If your child is in need of new shoes, you start thinking about what it will take to get them. What shoe size? What style? Where can you get the best deal? In other words, you focus on getting baby those new shoes.

It works the same way when you are struggling. Look for things you can do, to take the focus off of the struggles.

If it's during the spring, one of my 3 focuses will be my garden. I am thinking not only about what I want to grow, but how I want to use the harvest. As a writer, I am always in need of fresh material – so I begin thinking about topics that may be of interest to others who are seeking to live a Simple Life. And as someone who loves to create, I focus on weaving projects, new bread baking techniques, or different recipes I can create to add some fun to our meals.

Once baby has new shoes – or one of your focuses is completed, find another focus to replace it. If summer is headed your way, maybe you can plan a Staycation with your family. If you are creative, consider a new project – or, start planning on making handmade gifts for the holidays. The key is to keep 3 main focuses at the ready and dig down into all the details.

The purpose of your 3 positive focuses is to help you keep the worry about your struggles at bay. Inevitably, thoughts and worries about them will try to creep back into your mind. When they do, give them the barest of acknowledgement. Simply say, "I see you standing there, but I don't have time for you right now. Baby needs new shoes, so it's time for you to leave." And then shift your thinking to a Main Focus.

For me, my faith is a priority, so I usually recite Isaiah 41:10 between telling those thoughts to leave and thinking about one of my focuses. This verse says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Thinking on this verse does two things: 1) It acts as a reminder that I have already handed over these struggles to God, and 2) It reminds me that I don't have to be afraid or dismayed, because God is bigger and stronger than anything I will ever have to deal with.

By doing this, does that mean your struggles will go away? Maybe. Maybe not. It may be a struggle that will eventually resolve itself, and it may be something we have to live with for a while longer. But what it will do is to keep you from being paralyzed with fear. It will help you to accept we all have struggles, but they don't have to define us, or control us. Instead, we can just put them out of sight and mind for a while, and focus on what is good in our lives.

You may not have a prayer bench and a pond, but there is somewhere you can go. Find a lake or body of water nearby and go there. If you don't, find someplace else – other than in your home or yard. The reason for this is symbolic: you are taking your worries away from where you live, dropping them off, and leaving them. It acts as a refreshing of the spirit, and once you leave the worry portion behind, you can walk away calmer, and ready to explore your 3 Main focuses.

If you are struggling, I am so sorry you have to go through this. But know that you are not alone. We all have struggles. It's how we deal with them that counts. This process may take time to do well – but just keep at it. Before long, it will get easier, until you rarely focus on the struggles.

And if they are getting too much to bear, just remember – Baby needs new shoes, so it may be time to focus on that for a while.

If you want to learn more about the topic at hand just visit my website at www.thefarmwife.com.

If you have questions or just want to stop in for a visit, you can do that through email at thevirtualporch@gmail.com. And be sure to subscribe – you don't want to miss a single conversation. I'll be sitting on the porch every Monday morning waiting for your visit!

Thanks again for stopping in. I will see you next week on Living a Simple Life with a Back Porch View. And while you are waiting on the next episode, grab that glass of refreshment, pull up a rocker, and sit back for a while. It's time to

Relax & Enjoy!

julie