

## Finding Obedience to Trust

I was enjoying the wet sand squishing through my toes while walking along the shoreline. I stopped and looked out toward the vast, but glorious sunset before me, and felt my heart race as I tried to catch my breath. I looked down at my feet as the gentle tide rolled in and washed over my feet. I happened to glance back at the footprints I had just made, and marveled how the water covered each one, eventually causing them to disappear completely. Footprints in the sand...how temporary they are. "How temporary we are." I thought to myself.

I have so longed to get away, wanting to find answers in a place of solitude, but also where I can commune with God and enjoy his wonderful artistry. As I look at the colorful wisps of clouds in the sky, I imagine God holding a massive paintbrush. First, he dips the brush into his infinite pallet of colors and then he looks at the canvas before him as he gently touches the sky here and there until the scene is absolutely perfect. I smile to myself as I imagine Him looking my way and winking, saying, "What do you think about this?"

The goose bumps on my arms remind me that it is growing chilly, so I turn and start back to my little rental cottage up on the hill. I might even get a fire going if it is cold in the house. That does sound nice and cozy. The wind is blowing gently over my face and through my hair as I make my way up the sandy trail. I keep looking back at that sunset, seeing if God has changed anything before the sun goes all the way down. "Still beautiful," I thought, but I knew it would be gone very soon. The footprints, the sunset, all gone in such a short time.

Decisions need to be made. I don't like feeling this way at all. It seems like such a short time from when I was a little girl until now. Yet so many things have happened in my life. Many events have been difficult, and many have been wonderful. But what do I do, when even during a time of feeling blessed, I still find myself lacking? Dreams unfulfilled, ideals that have driven me for so long, cast aside for the tasks of the day. Nobody is at fault or to blame. Just life happening as it always has, but can I bear to live the next half of my life wondering if there is something better, something I've missed out on? Do I have that right?

I have made promises. Promises to love, honor, and cherish. Promises to abide by the scriptures and remain faithful to all I hold dear. I am not abused. I am well taken care of, probably more than most. Others would envy what I have, so much that I feel ashamed to have these thoughts and fears. I have no reason to leave, other than wondering if I genuinely want to stay. I have broken no vows. Do all people come to this crossroad, at this time in their lives? Again, like the footprints in the sand, and the rising and setting of the sun...it all goes so quickly.

As I sit and watch the fire burning warmly in front of me, and I listen to the waves breaking on the rocks outside, I am feeling thankful for the comforts around me. I want to trust my heavenly Father that all will be fine, and perhaps these thoughts and fears will pass. But I also feel guilty. A scripture comes to me, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams..." (1 Samuel 15:22) Will my need to obey be stronger than my earthly yearning for finding the part of me I believe has been misplaced somehow? And then again, like the wind, the tides, and the footprints in the sand...it is such a short time until the final day comes when I know I will live forever, with God Himself. Such a very, very short time.