

GRINS, GRIT & GRACE

Stories From Stable Days Youth Ranch

THE ART OF BURDEN BEARING

ANECHOMAI & COLOSSIANS 3:13

BY CARYL LESTER

Each year the Stable Days Share Garden has rows and rows and rows of tomatoes. We have Big Boys, and Cherrys, Yellows and Romas, Black Beauties and Brandywines. We start them in our indoor grow room usually around Mid-March with the help of our volunteer team (quick volunteer team plug...YOU are invited to join us!!) After the cute little shoots grow strong enough, they are hardened off and then planted outside. Once they are in the ground, we use t-posts, reeds, cages, and twine as support for the growing plants so that when they grow heavy, and they will, and the strong winds blow, and they will blow, and the rain pounds down, as it always does, and when our cute little tomato plants can't hold themselves up, support is there and they will stay standing.

The Bible's New Testament book of Colossians was written by a man named Paul. He was a pharisee known for his self-righteous pride and persecution of the early church. Paul became a follower of Jesus on his way to the city of Damascus. (great story that you can find in the book of Acts!!). In 60-62 AD, during his third missionary journey and while under house arrest in Rome, he wrote letters to the several churches including one to the church in Colossae, encouraging the believers to live well and to be motivated by pure love and by their faith in Jesus Christ. In the 13th verse of the 3rd chapter Paul wrote,

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a



**HOME GROWN TOMATOES, HOME GROWN
TOMATOES, WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE WITHOUT
HOMEGROWN TOMATOES, ONLY TWO THINGS
THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY, THAT'S TRUE LOVE AND
HOME GROWN TOMATOES**

- JOHN DENVER

grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

The word “bear” in the original Greek is *Anechomai* and it means “to sustain, bear or hold up against something”. This word describes the picture of what we do when we tie a stake to our tomato plants to help it stand up under the weight of its load, transferring the burden of the plant to the strength of the stake. Jesus, through the inspired words of Paul, is asking us to do the same. We are asked to do more than simply put up with each other, we’re asked to *Anechomai* with one another. When we see a spouse, neighbor, friend, sister or brother who is weighted down by the devastations, chaos, cares and worries of the day, we are expected to share their burden. We are expected to stake ourselves to them, wrap our arms around them and let them know that our strength is theirs, and they need not feel alone, broken or destroyed, because we stand with them, hearts filled with compassion, humility, patience,



**A LITTLE CONSIDERATION,
A LITTLE THOUGHT FOR OTHERS,
MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.**

- CHRISTOPHER ROBIN

forgiveness and the pure love that binds the hearts of those who call on the name of Jesus Christ.

Early on a Monday morning, way back in 1996 I sat on the top step of our front porch. Our four kids were just inside, the two oldest getting ready for elementary school while our little boys laid in their cribs still dreaming of adventure or perhaps mischief.

Earlier that morning my husband Ben was packing for a work trip. I had asked him to please stay. He said no. His flight left in less than an hour and his plans for the week were already in place.

I wanted to cry out and tell how much I needed him to stay and how fragile I really felt, but being Scandinavian, or maybe just full of pride, I didn't.

I had been certain that Ben would agree to stay home, I can't remember another time that I had asked but because I didn't share, he had no idea how I felt.

So there I sat, outside our cute little Victorian home, with a cold cup of coffee in my cold trembling hand watching the taillights as Ben turned the corner and drove out of sight.

It's a silly thing but I've always envied those women who could cry with grace, big, pretty, soft, perfectly shaped drops of tears that seem to shine as they pass down a slightly blushed cheek.

I don't cry well. My composure is rocked as my nose drips and my body trembles. It always starts with a small quiver of my chin, and with no consent the trembles move to my shoulders and then like a thief, the tears steal their way into the depth and rawness of my sad and often fearful heart, transforming me into a shaking red faced child who has failed to be courageous, feeling broken undone and unable.

I knew it was almost time to go inside and put on my mom hat so I pressed through what I had hoped to be even breaths of recovery but found only choked up broken sniffly whimpers .

I prayed and I prayed to not be anxious or afraid, but there I was once again both anxious and afraid.

POOH'S THOUGHTFUL THOUGHTS...

"I always get to where I am going by walking away from where I have been."

"It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn't use long, difficult words but rather short, easy words like 'What about lunch?'"

The last three days had left me tired and now I would have to face more medical tests, the results and the unknown without Ben by my side.

What had left me so anxious you ask? Before the weekend had begun I had gone in to see my doctor for an unusual and fairly severe pain. My doctor sent me over to radiology for a scan. After the scan, and as I was leaving the clinic, a gal in scrubs came up to me and handed me a flyer with information on a cancer support group. With a kind smile she said "I thought this might be helpful."

I left quickly and stoically, driving somehow by muscle memory as I picked up my boys and then headed to the school to pick up the girls. We arrived home in the usual fashion and the usual time giving me a chance to slip away and collect my rouge thoughts. Ben would be home late, arriving on the last flight of the night, as was his routine.

I was exhausted and ready for bed as soon as the kids were all down for the night. I would wait and talk with Ben in the morning. I crawled under the covers and closed my eyes. Waves of sadness flooded my mind followed by anxious moments of heart pounding panic.

My mother had fought cancer a few times now and won, I had a friend who fought and lost. What will my story be, will I fight and win, will I fight and lose? Will I be the one to stand by Ben as our children grow? Will I lose my hair, will I lose my life? I took a deep breath and began to talk back to my panicked thoughts with an assertive 'pull yourself together' shake of my head.

In the morning, while we were enjoying our first cups of fresh hot coffee, with no tears and my practiced stoic look, I told Ben that I had cancer, and that we would know more after my Monday morning appointment.

Ben took the news as the strong Christian leader that he is and has always been: full of faith and expectation that the Lord would heal and provide.

Ben's love for me is shown through his kindness and devotion and I know that whether he is in or out of town that never changes. But even with that truth, I still felt the sting of his absence and the chill that the unknown brings.

A deep and surrendered sigh escaped my lips as I rose to my feet. I dumped out my cold coffee and turned to grab the handle of the porch door.

That's when out of the corner of my eye, I saw our car. Ben parked in front of the house, swung open the door and ran to me. With tears in his eyes he pulled me into his arms.

"I Love You!" he cried, pressing his cheek against mine. "I was half way to the airport and had to come back. If you need me to be here I'll be here. I will always be here!"

Ben is one who would stand on his head in the rain for a friend if that is what that friend needed. He weeps when others weep (Romans 12:15) and he bears with others through the burdens they face.

For over 30 years Ben has been my friend, he has loved me, encouraged me and forgiven me when I'm prideful, stubborn, selfish, foolish, or anxious. He bears my weight, when my strength fails and reminds me to stand firm because we serve a God who is never surprised or shaken.



LEAN ON ME, WHEN YOU'RE NOT STRONG
AND I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND I'LL HELP YOU CARRY ON
FOR IT WON'T BE LONG 'TIL I'M GONNA NEED
SOMEBODY TO LEAN ON. -BILL WITHERS

JUST FOR FUN... A Desperado rides into town, stopping at the mercantile for supplies. When he steps outside again, he finds his horse has been stolen. "I'm a gonna close my eyes and I'm a gonna count to 10," he bellowed to the terrified crowd, "and if my horse ain't back, I'll do here what I had to do in Houston." Lucky for them all, when he opened his eyes his horse had been returned. As the Desperado saddled up, a local can't help but ask, "Sir, what was it you did in Houston?" The Desperado narrows his eyes and hisses "I had to walk home."

APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY SUPER POWERS

BY HANNAH DEWEY



Out here at the lovely Stable Days Youth Ranch, we have the very best garden this side of the Mississippi. We plant a hodgepodge of fruits, veggies, and herbs (and weeds) every year with a growing desire to expand our skills and knowledge of the greens. This garden supplements well over a hundred families with delicious seasonal produce. We are blessed to have so very many volunteers who plant, weed, water, trellis, plan and more every summer to help us accomplish this amazing feat.

In this amazing garden, we seek to do more than just grow foods. We love it even more when we grow character, work ethic, relationships, and confidence. We use the garden to encourage our volunteers and participants to grow in their decision making by encouraging them as they move through rows of plant starts and various weeds. We encourage work ethic as we pound fence posts on ninety degree days while our arms shake and our brows sweat. We build relationships over lame jokes and occasionally an overflow of tears as we weed what feels like hundreds of thistle plants. You see character grow as our volunteers lead by example with great attitudes and strong hearts as they head up to the garden to work before they do the fun stuff like water gun fights and horse painting. And we see confidence build when harvest comes and a kid gets to literally eat the fruits of their labor.

Gardening teaches more about life than any of my other hobbies, so I've put together a little list of thoughts and lessons learned in the garden:

1. We learn about the dangers of letting unproductive thoughts take root like weeds do, and how taking them captive early on is

essential before they take over space that could be used for good! See 2 Corinthians 10:5 which says that we should bring every thought captive to obey Jesus Christ.

2. We learn that there is a season for growth, a season of blooming, a season of collecting the reward of our hard work, and even a season of death. See Ecclesiastes 3:1 which says that for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.

3. We learn that everything here on earth really does depend on the Son (sun) and how the more we turn our faces like a sunflower to the Light that we can find in Christ, the more we will grow and the more our lives will be productive while we are planted here on this planet. See Isaiah 45:22 where God says, "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is no other."

4. We learn about how essential a good foundation is, and a firm understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as we test the soil to ensure that it has the essentials we need for growing plants. This also teaches us how important it is that we are ready and knowledgeable, even before it shows. See Matthew 7:24-27 where Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish builders. The wise builder made sure he had a firm foundation before he started building and the Bible says that if we hear and obey God's word, we are like a wise builder.

These lessons are just of a few of the words we've heard whispered on the winds as God speaks to our hearts while we work. What will you hear?

IN THE GARDEN...

You have the chance to plant seeds of things very special in the hearts, minds, and spirits of your children as you garden together. - Cathy James

SIMPLY MOMENTOUS

BY Elizabeth Meares

Kylie was one of the early participants at the ranch, and I had the joy of meeting her as part of a girls' Bible study and session group. The following season I worked one-on-one with her, and was able to truly get to know this blossoming young woman. Kylie and I weeded the garden, scooped poop, rode horses (turns out Kylie and Dakota make quite the hula hoop spinning circus act!), discovered that arugula is her favorite microgreen but mustard is too spicy, snuggled with the ranch rabbit, relaxed on the river, and all in all had a wonderful time in the haven that the Lord has provided in the ranch. As the summer progressed though, I felt a tug at my heart for Kylie that continued to persist, but though I felt there was a particular reason for this tug, I could not think what it was. Then it hit me. I could not think what it was, because that was dependent on me, and what I should have started with right from the first tug was to pray about it, for goodness knows the Lord is the one who gave the tug in the first place. Okay, Lord, what do you want to show me? How can I speak Your truth into this dear one? Kylie is sweet, curious, tender, funny, and also strongly timid and uncertain. At 13 years old she was a good head taller than I (not terribly difficult, but still) and held herself in a condensed manner, as if trying to keep herself from being too conspicuous. In all her sweet curiosity she prefaced nearly every statement or question with "I'm sorry", "this may be stupid but", or the like. "Oh" was the only dumbfounded thought in my head as I connected the tug my heart had been feeling with these and other observations. For not only had the Lord opened my eyes to Kylie's insecurities, He had shown me a mirror of my younger self in so many ways.

Children and families who come to the ranch come from all walks of life; we have no qualifications for eligibility. And while some come from varying degrees of brokenness and heartache, some, like Kylie, come from sound families who love the Lord and lead their children through that love. But the world is hard, and the

world is loud. Even in a home full of love and protection, wounding happens. However, wounding is never the final chapter, for we are loved by a Great Physician and He heals the brokenhearted. Before I knew what the words would be, my mouth was open and I was. . . truly, for lack of a better word, calling Kylie out on her self deprecating words and posture. I could have swallowed my own tongue! Thankfully though, the words continued and to this day I'm not totally sure what I said to Kylie, but I know the words were not of me, but of a Father who weeps for her and of my preteen heart that longed to be told by someone outside of my immediate family that the words I then stumbled over and held back were worth hearing. I do remember that Kylie maintained eye contact with me the whole



***YOU ARE GOLDEN, PRECIOUS AS A PRAYER FLYING
UP THROUGH THE AIR WHILE THE RAIN IS FALLING***

-LADY ANTEBELLUM

BEAUTIFUL TRUTH

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

conversation, the longest she ever had, and then agreed with my challenge to refrain from her negative self talk, at least while at the ranch.

Over the following sessions, Kylie's speech was sometimes just as halting as before, but now it was because she would stop herself, give me a rueful little grin, and then continue on, her shoulders straightening a little. Never once did I remind her; she always caught herself. One day I handed her a halter and asked her to get a horse on her own, the expression she gave me would make you think I'd asked her to walk from Grand Forks to Crookston barefoot in January. I gave her a smile and a nudge though, and she set off with a deep breath and squared shoulders, completing the task without a hitch. My face began to hurt I was smiling so hard at her. The beauty of her confidence as she lead Dakota back to me could have melted the polar caps. She followed this momentous and deceptively simple action with "now what?", excitement taking the place of her far more standard trepidation. "ANYTHING", I wanted to shout for all to hear. Anything is next, because Kylie, you are pure gold and the Lord can do incredible things through you!



THIS IS GOD'S WORD ON THE SUBJECT..."I'LL SHOW UP AND TAKE CARE OF YOU AS I PROMISED...I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I HAVE IT ALL PLANNED OUT—PLANS TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, NOT ABANDON YOU, PLANS TO GIVE YOU THE FUTURE YOU HOPE FOR." JEREMIAH 29:10

GOD'S LOVE IS METEORIC, HIS LOYALTY
ASTRONOMIC, HIS PURPOSE TITANIC,
HIS VERDICTS OCEANIC.

**YET IN HIS LARGENESS NOTHING GETS LOST;
NOT A MAN, NOT A MOUSE, SLIPS THROUGH THE
CRACKS. HOW EXQUISITE YOUR LOVE, O GOD!
ALL HUMANITY FINDS SHELTER IN THE
SHADOW OF YOUR WINGS**

JOIN THE HERD! BECOME A SPONSOR

Sponsoring a horse is a unique opportunity to impact the ministry by directly helping one of our horses. Your generous donation will help provide for hay, supplements, medical treatment, rehabilitation, training, fence, equipment and other costs that are directly associated with the care of your sponsored horse.

A few of our horses have physical disabilities, some have medical needs, some scare easy, some are bossy, some are in need of learning to trust, and they all, just like our kids, want to be loved and cared for. The nurturing and caring of this herd is a privilege and one of our highest priorities. By choosing to JOIN THE HERD, you can further ensure quality care for our horses as well as a continued cost free opportunity for the children who participate in this unique program.

As a sponsor you are welcome to set up an appointment and come out to say HAY! And if you would like to groom or provide more hands on care for your sponsored horse we would be glad to train you!

"JOIN THE HERD" go to www.stabledays.org or give us a call at 701-330-9952.

CHERISHED BEYOND MEASURE

God, Please give me the strength to let go and entrust everything to you! When I feel anxious, alone and unloved, when shame says to me that because I am flawed I am unacceptable, Your grace says to me that though I am afraid I am never alone and though I am flawed, I am cherished beyond measure!



**IT IS ONLY THOSE WHO FAITHFULLY PLANTS SEEDS
IN THE SPRING, THAT REAP A HARVEST IN THE FALL!**

VOLUNTEER WITH US...

There are dozens of ways to volunteer at Stable Days, and most of the time the horses are the focus, but in this newsletter we want to highlight the Share Garden!

The Share Garden grows fruits and vegetables not only for our participants, but for our area food banks.

We plan to grow all the traditional favorites like carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, beans, peas, tomatoes, and a huge variety of greens.

This new this year we are expanding our perennial plantings and mini orchards to include grapes, honeyberries, plums and more apples!

We'll be building trellises, planting trees, learning more about processing fruit into juice, and of course all of the jobs that need to be done to grow a healthy garden.

The vegetable of the year for Share Garden is the... **CARROT!** We'll plant as many varieties as possible and enjoy tasting them all!

Green thumbs are not required, just generous hearts, and hard working hands and feet!

**We have some modifications for those with limited mobility.*



Breed: Registered Paint | Gender: Gelding
Color: Bay | DOB: 2009 | Height: 15 hands

Comanche is a gem, but at times he can look more like a diamond in the rough than a polished stone.

He is a beautiful and complex horse with layers of affection, disdain, trust, mistrust, try, struggle, go, whoa, regard and refusal.

He hangs back in the pasture and watches those who visit with careful consideration, evaluating their place in his mind as a confident handler, a hurting heart, an arrogant high headed bully or a calm yet cautious soul.

He has his preferences and likes his friend to be above all else kind, true, and able to live in the moment as he chooses to do.

He prefers a quiet mind that has left the over-analyzing, over-thinking, over-worked and over-stimulated thoughts behind. He prefers to spend his moments with those who have not forgotten the art of being still.

Friends who are soft yet direct, and quiet enough to leave room for clear, creative connections are the ones he enjoys the most.

And when he finds a friend that looks for and values his natural and soulful language, he will remove his many layers, revealing his loyal and kindred spirit.

To sponsor Comanche or one of the other SDYR horses go to <https://www.stabledays.org/join-the-herd.html>

GETTING INVOLVED

Stable Days programs are free of charge, allowing families to participate without financial concerns. But while our programs are free, our cost is high, so if you would like to join our team through giving, mail in the above form, contact us by e-mail at info@stabledays.org, call 701-330-9952, or visit our website at www.stabledays.org.



17721 429th Avenue So. West
East Grand Forks, MN 56721



THE BEES

The Bees at Stable Days invite you to join our volunteer team, to bee-curious, bee-brave and bee-simply amazed, as you learn and grow along with the Bee-Team.

Have you ever wondered how it felt to be zipped up snug in a cozy bee suit while checking on the health and happiness of a hive?

Have you ever wondered if there were lessons to be learned, applications to make or advice to heed from a honey bee?

Have you ever wondered if a bee cares that according to all known laws of aviation, there is no way that he should be able to fly?

Have you ever wondered how gratifying it would be to plant a pollinator garden, paint a bee box, or clean bee frames?

Now's the time to bee-bold and jump in!



"KEEP BEES" , THEY SAID.

"IT WILL BE FUN", THEY SAID.

"AND THEY WERE RIGHT" WE SAY!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The SDYR Share Garden is looking for caregivers! We need planters, weeders, waterers, whistlers (for while we're working) in general we need hearts, hands and feet that are passionate about honoring God by remembering the poor and serving those who are less fortunate.

