

## “Tonya”

You never know how, where, or in what way the Lord will acknowledge to you that He is in your midst. He often will reveal to us that He is in our presence in the most unsuspecting ways. He has a very unique way about Him that surprises us, especially when we are looking for lightning bolts, signs, miracles, and wonders as either proof or confirmation that He is among us. It seems that we are the ones that will often try to dictate to God how we would like to *feel* His presence or *see* His handy work in our times of need. We come to the conclusion that unless God does this specific act that we have chosen then He must not be with us. The Scriptures say, however, that “His ways are not our ways...His thoughts are not our thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8) and, since this is the case, we must accept that God will reveal Himself to us in a variety of ways. One such way, is through another person, usually unknown to you. However, here is the catch...you must also be willing to be the “other person” in order for this method to be implemented by God. You see, God is looking for volunteers to be the “other person”. This is where my article begins. It begins with someone who was willing to be the “other person”, and that God used her to minister to me and my wife recently as we were facing a difficult situation. God used an unknown “other person” named Tonya to minister to us and confirm His presence.

God has called all of us to be “Tonyas”. Throughout the Bible, we see examples of people that were willing to be used by God. These Biblical characters and heroes all portray the same characteristics that Tonya displayed that morning when she approached us to share a word of encouragement even though she did not know us. She exhibited the “...great *boldness*” that Paul prayed for in Acts 4:29, and the “...*stoutheartedness*” that David claimed in Psalms 138:3. She welled up with Holy Spirit fervor as she sat next to us overhearing our situation and knowing that she had to say something. She did not deny access to the Holy Spirit and became *obedient* to the call knowing that God had something to say to me and my wife. She set aside her own fear and let herself be used by Him. She laid aside any concern for what others sitting in that waiting room might have thought of her as she *ministered* to us *publicly*. She acted on the words of Jesus when He said that “if anyone be ashamed of me...the Son of Man will be ashamed of him” (Mark 8:38) and did not give thought to public opinion or scrutiny. In fact, she did not even know for sure, with any certainty, that my wife and I were Christians. To Tonya, that was not important at that moment. She just wanted to share Jesus with us.

At that moment, Tonya became what Jesus has asked us to be...“the light of the world” (Matt 5:14). She recognized a need that was apparent and decided to be the light and fill that need with encouragement, care, concern, and well-spoken words. In the most unlikely place she became “*the light of the world*” for us, and I suspect for others who might have overheard her as well.

Finally, Tonya did not allow personal adversity to distract her from opportunity to be used by God. She decided to instead find opportunity in adversity. Her decision to turn the spotlight off her own problems and challenges and focus on what the Lord would have her do is an *act of selflessness, sacrifice, and servant hood*. In Matthew 14:1-14, we find that Jesus exhibited this very same behavior. Upon finding out that John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus (obviously distraught) sets out for some alone time only to find out that a large crowd had followed him. The Bible says that when He saw them “...He took compassion on them and healed their sick (vs.14)”. Jesus became so concerned with the needs of others over His own that He put their needs first and set aside His. Being able to model this particular example of Christian living exhibited by Jesus can be difficult but on that day, Tonya did just that!

God is looking for many more to become that “other person”. He promises that as we do, not only will we make an impact in the lives of others for His Glory, but it will also impact us as well. Make a decision to become that “other person” for God, and one day you too will be for someone... a Tonya.

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