

Heavenly Visions

By Sheila Johnson

For the majority of this year, I have been (and still am) working with a delightful group of intergenerational women who are learning the lost art of sewing and textile design through the Lydia Project Ministry (inspired by Lydia of Thyatira). She, along with other women of the Bible, is a visionary, an inspiration, a true example of leadership and determination. You are invited to read about her and her family and community in the Book of Acts, Chapter sixteen.

For the beginner seamstress, sewing a straight line may appear to be a daunting task, but for the more experienced, we understand that sewing a straight stitch comes with years of experience and gnashing of the teeth! In most of our classes, the teacher becomes the student, and the student can be a wise teacher. Nothing is impossible, practice makes perfect, and a stitch in time saves nine, are just a few of the clichés that are at the heart of our ministry.

The volunteers and students have gleaned volumes from each other about the many methods of threading a needle, cutting out patterns, sewing on buttons, hemming, and other tasks related to sewing; the community that we have formed is much more than making garments. We are weaving a very large tapestry using threads of hope, despair, light, darkness, tears, laughter, sharing, caring, support, reading and learning the Word, discovering our strengths and weaknesses, and learning to trust ourselves with God as we seek to navigate our very delicate lives.

A vast majority of us have found the courage to allow our tears to freely flow as we bemoan the fact that our children don't know or accept the salvation that God has gifted us through the life of his Son. There seems to be comfort in knowing that we are not alone, and that hope abounds through the prayers of mothers (and fathers). We gather weekly to learn how to join textiles and threads to make something beautiful. It is the kind of therapy that doesn't require sitting on a couch talking to a doctor. We each show our appreciation by hearing, listening, empathizing, sympathizing, comforting, and even crying. We have artistically created a vision of a better world.

Now and then our threads come loose and need to be rearranged or tacked in place as we talk about issues that affect the quality of life for ourselves, our families, and our world, i.e., racial discord, national pride replacing faith in God, abortion, sexism, cultural genocide, adoption, opioids, abuse, and displaced children or spouses. Many of our visions have become delayed but not denied. We see a future built by faith, forgiveness, and love. We are not looking through rose-colored glasses, but through the lens of a God who keeps his promises. We are not naive enough to believe that our journeys will not be met with grated trials and tribulations, but we know that we are living testimonies of the faithfulness of God.

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