Faith and Our Story

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Proverbs 3: 5-6. NKJV*

Forty-nine years ago today, I said, “I do” to Darryl Jay Rodman. Our whole story really is a story of faith. We first met when I moved back to Washington from Alaska. This was in 1972, and we had flights in and out of Whidbey then. Because I had a three-hour layover, I wrote a letter to a friend who really loved any excuse to come to the airport, and asked him if he wanted to hang out. Instead of staying at the airport, he asked if he could take me to meet this woman. We ended up in an old Victorian home next to a small church called Zion United House of Prayer. As we walked in the house, George left me in the living room. There was a young man sitting on the couch reading his Bible. I said, “hello”. He looked up and said “Praise the Lord” in a very short don’t bother me tone. I thought, what a spiritual snob! That was my introduction to my future husband.

The associate pastor of the church next door ran this house. Her name was Rev. E.M. Woodward, or “Mom” as we called her. She was a small English woman, who was a prophetess and teacher. She lived a life of faith and trust. God led me to move into that house, and I learned what a walk of faith really looked like. The house had 20 or more people living in it and we prayed for food and other needs. Darryl was the pastor’s right-hand man and learned from. Darryl did not live in this house. We didn’t really hang out, but were both busy about God’s assignment for ourselves.

This was a unique time. God was moving in the Seattle area. Our Senior Pastor, Eugene Drayton was an African-American. God told him to get ready for an influx. He told him to stop preaching “clothesline” messages and begin to open his heart to all kinds of people. It was wonderful–all kinds of nationalities and backgrounds began to get saved. There were services during day and three night time services. We learned to follow the Spirit and listen to his voice. Prayer would happen whenever there was a need. It became a lifestyle.

There was really no dating during this time. We just wanted to get to know Jesus better. One day, in 1973, the pastor asked for a meeting with me, Darryl, and another young woman, named Malana. He said he felt God wanted the church to expand to Portland, and would we plant a church there! Here we were, three single people. But we did it. In an awkward moment, Darryl came to me and said, “You don’t think God is asking us to get married, do you?” I said, no way. He looked so relieved! We moved to Portland. I learned a lot about Darryl during the three months I was there. Again, none of us even thought about dating during this season.

Because of some situations, I moved back to Seattle and continued my leadership role at the house. I did not see Darryl for about 8 months. One day, some of us headed to California to a conference. We spent the night at the house in Portland. As I passed Darryl in the hallway, I felt God show me the love he would have for his wife! I thought that is weird, why would I be thinking about that? (I also could tell God had worked some of his self-absorption out since I had seen him). A few weeks late, I felt the Lord tell me, “You and Darryl are going to get married”. Wow, I kept that stowed away in my heart! Finally, I shared it with Mom, expecting her to say, “No way”. But she said, “I can see that working!”.

She sounded Darryl out to see if God had been speaking to him about marriage, and she came back and said, “It will not happen soon”. I said, Ok…and went about my business. My heart just wanted what God wanted. “I prayed, “Father, if this is you, then fine. If not, I throw it out the window. You catch it and make it work.” I left for a two-week trip. Apparently while I was gone both Mom and Pastor Drayton met with Darryl! As they talked, he said a roll a dex with all the single gals in the church flashed by! My name wasn’t on it, but when they mentioned my name, he said, “I have peace”. So we sort of had an arranged marriage.

When I returned, Mom informed me that Darryl was coming up that night from Portland to ask me to marry him! The next morning at breakfast, he asked if I wanted to go to the Arboretum. I said, yes. We awkwardly made small talk in the car. As we walked through this beautiful area, he said, well I guess you know why we are here! I said, yes. He said, do you want to? I said, ok. That was it! Our first date and we are now engaged! This was May 11, 1974. We both had peace. Of all the young men around me, Darryl’s integrity and walk with the Lord inspired me. I felt safe with him.

Pastor Drayton had a trip planned to Texas on May 25, so we scheduled our wedding at 9:00 a.m. that morning two weeks away! Our pre-marriage counseling comprised him telling me if Darryl wanted to kiss me while I was cooking spaghetti, to let him! We told our folks, called people to invite them and two weeks later we were married. During those two weeks, I found a dress. My sister helped make our bridesmaid dresses, and we figured out how to make things work. During those two weeks, God blossomed a love between us that was amazing. He told me that we would have very few storms within our marriage, but many storms outside that would drive us closer to together. He told Darryl that he was bonding our hearts together with barnacle glue., the strongest natural made glue on the planet. During these two weeks, Pastor Drayton’s father passed away, so Mom did the ceremony.

God’s guidance for me was “it is not what Darryl wants, it’s not what Martha wants” it is what God wants that matters. As we sought him first, our egos weren’t part of our story. We submitted the journey to Him, and it was good. We had many challenges, but somehow, by God’s grace, we walked them out with Him and each other. He was an amazing man, and it privileged me to be his wife. He passed away October 5, 2012. I still miss him.

My heart take away for each of you reading this, especially if you are married is: seek Him and His ways together. Don’t give up. Don’t forget who it was that you married and why you said yes to them. Ask the Lord to refresh your marriage. If you are single and looking, don’t settle what looks good on the outside, but seek Him and His heart for your future. Darryl and I were a team–in fact many of the churches we ministered together in had started jokingly calling us “Dartha”! If you are single and not looking, keep teaming up with King Jesus…He is the best teammate! I know this is a different post than normal, but I just felt to share our story.

*Father, I thank you for the journey Darryl and I had together for 38 years. I thank you for the children we produced and the eleven grandchildren that love you. I thank you for touching marriages with our story, because you are a good, good God. No matter what our day holds, we choose to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not to our own understanding. Help us to acknowledge You and You will direct our paths. In Jesus’ Name, amen.*