

Hope: The Olive Leaf – February 2011
By Melissa, IA

In Genesis chapter 8, the story of Noah in the ark continues. At this point, we are learning how long Noah was in the ark. After settling on ground, Noah had to wait for the waters to recede. Imagine how it would have felt to finally rest, no longer being tossed, to and fro, by the waters. Even though they had come to rest, their time in the ark, continued on. Day after day, Noah and his family waits for the ark to be opened, but the door remained shut. After a while, Noah, wanting to know what is going on, sends out a raven, and then a dove. Still nothing. A week later, the dove is sent out again, and late in the evening it returns with an olive leaf. Can you imagine the hope that sprung forth from this one little leaf?

As we homeschool, days can run into one another and we can also feel the tension of having to continue on. We wonder if our days will change. Will we always be struggling over the diphthongs, science vocabulary or algebraic equations? Will the laundry get caught up? We wonder if this season in our lives will ever end. Sometimes we, like Noah, need an olive leaf to help us keep going.

This olive leaf need not be large. The encouragement that was brought to Noah in the form of a small leaf was huge. Can you imagine... a leaf! In other circumstances, a leaf might be laughed off, perhaps considered very insignificant, maybe not even worth the effort. But to the one needing the encouragement the olive leaf can mean so much!

Encouragement can come from God in many forms... a small feat, recognition of one insignificant letter, a serene landscape, a well-timed verse, a call from a friend, a hug from a neighbor, a compliment, reassurance, and so much more. Have you considered your role in being an olive leaf for someone else?

While we often want encouragement to take the form of something we desire, we can miss the blessing by looking for a particular shape instead of recognizing what is there before us. Do you often desire 100% victory before you will celebrate, before you will even acknowledge that progress is being made? Let's also recognize the small steps that get us there; those small steps which encourage us to keep going.

Sometimes recording or taking notice of the little “olive leaves” in our daily walks will help us get over the hump, to keep striving forward. Your record keeping may be by photos, by journaling, by blogging, by sharing with your husband, etc. Whatever works for you, use it. Create a memory to be looked back on, to carry you through the possible trials ahead. And as Noah did, give praise to God, when you are able to acknowledge that olive leaf that helped you through one of the tough times in your life.

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