CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

NO LONGER TWO, BUT ONE

By Cindee Snider Re

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

"She held his hand like she never wanted to let him go." Those words replayed over and over in my mind as I cut the grass on a cool, overcast Tuesday morning. They were unusual words from my husband.

WHAT AM I WILLING TO INVEST?

"Lord," I wondered, "is that what my husband wants – to know he is so deeply loved and appreciated that I never want to let him go?" The question simmered at the back of my mind for a couple of weeks. Then, one afternoon, I met a friend at the park, and she asked how I was doing. When I hesitated, she questioned further. It had been a long few days of physical pain and I'd grown quiet. Communicating when the pain is bad is difficult and isolating. Thoughts spring to mind, but speaking them aloud requires more energy than I have ... or maybe more energy than I'm willing to invest.

Willing to invest. Those three small words sliced through the silence. It hadn't occurred to me that selfishness could creep in with the pain. That realization seared my heart. How often had I expected my husband to know what I was feeling, to understand my isolation, to somehow (without being told) figure out how difficult communication can sometimes be for me?

I expected my husband to read my mind, but he can't. Only God knows my every thought, and every word I'm going to speak before even one of them is on my tongue—and that isn't enough even for God.

Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together. (Matthew 19:6 NLT)

EVEN GOD DOESN'T WANT A ONE-SIDED RELATIONSHIP

God doesn't want a one-sided relationship. He longs to spend time with us, for us to hunger and thirst for His Word, come to Him in prayer throughout the day, sit at His feet, and rest in His presence.

If all that is true of God, how can it be any less true of my husband, who was created in God's very image?

My lack of words doesn't only isolate me; it also isolates my husband, (whose words suddenly began to make sense). We all long for a relationship—deep, personal, intimate, genuine, honest, vulnerable, connecting—with God and one another.

We long to walk side-by-side through life, loving one another so deeply from the heart that we never want to let go, caring about one another so fully that we listen for the cry of each other's hearts. Then we begin to understand at a level only possible through Christ what it really means to be a child of God, a member of His beloved family, brothers, and sisters with and in Christ.

HE HELD MY HAND LIKE HE NEVER WANTED TO LET ME GO

On a beautiful April Saturday, my husband climbed a ladder, chainsaw in hand, to cut a limb from our sprawling oak tree. Seconds later, he was on the ground, unable to move. As I sat on the ground beside him, calling 911, he reached for my hand and wouldn't let go. Throughout the long hours in the Emergency Department, my husband held my hand, not wanting to let go. As the hours grew into days, and he was recuperating at home, he wanted me close, often reaching for my hand, something he had never done in 31 years of marriage. Those 12 words he'd uncharacteristically spoken to me years earlier sprang to mind. Only now those words were mine, "He held my hand like he never wanted to let me go."

I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go... (Song of Songs 3:4 ESV)

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What are you unwilling to invest in your marriage?
- What isolates you from your spouse?
- What small, simple thing could you do today to remind your spouse that you will not let them go?