



Enriching Women Enriching Women

Sailing...or Drifting?

Denmark was a new holiday destination for me. Visiting this summer, I discovered the great influence that the Vikings had on my country during the medieval era. They were the pirates of their time and set their sights across the seas to plunder Europe and beyond. Raiders and traders...not an American football team or a TV series!

Their only mode of transport was ships carved out of tree trunks; 'longship' was the name for the invading and warring variety. A single sail made from woven wool and long, wooden oars drove the boat onwards at great speed. Manpower – 60-80 per longship - was essential to this 'pushing away' of water, their combined effort in order not to drift, become aimless and lose direction. They were intentional about the success of their hit-and-run 'missions'; adept seafarers. Eventually, not content with pillaging the Monasteries and Minsters of England, a new breed of Viking leaders had the intent to conquer and take up residence. This they did mid 9th century. But King Alfred The Great gained success against them preventing their rule of the whole of England. He created safe places, off limits to predatory Vikings.

'...God! God majestic, God Himself the place in a country of broad rivers and streams, but rivers blocked to invading ships, off limits to predatory pirates....He'll keep us safe.' (Isaiah 33:21 The Message)

In times of danger and distress, we still need THE place where 'warships' cannot reach to rob us of life and it's vitality, direction and quest. All sorts of 'pirates' are out to threaten our peace and joy, conquer us and take up residence. Our masts may be wobbling and our sails in shreds, but there is a 'shipyard' to rebuild and repair hence making our vessel seaworthy again. Some don't want to leave the harbour of security...'a ship is safe in the harbour, but that's not what a ship is for'...

Let us be brave enough to deliberately sail, not drift, through each season of life. We are equipped to navigate even uncharted waters; progress comes no other way. Drifting can be dangerous; you have to take the helm if you are to reach your true destination...drifting just won't cut it! If we are to capture the 'treasures' of life let's plot a course around threatening rocks and yes, engage the exhilarating power of the wind. So repair the sail, mend the mast, pick up the oars and push from the shore for we are not for drifting! William Arthur Ward sums it up - 'The pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, the realist adjusts the sails' – Ahoy! Which one will you choose to be?

All set? Tighten the ropes, secure the mast, unfurl the sail and launch out into wider horizons, deeper waters and higher skies...you were born to sail!!

Affectionately, Judith

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