

## Christian Perspective: Highlands Youth for Christ

After our Youth for Christ fundraising banquet, I took home about 25 aprons our kitchen and serving volunteers use every year at the event.

They are full aprons that go around the neck and tie at the waist, but I decided the fabric was light enough that I could throw them into one load.

After the washer was finished, I threw them into the dryer, grabbing a few at a time but still thinking the load was not too heavy for them to all be together.

The dryer rang and I left my other housework to get them out and fold them, since I am not a huge fan of ironing. I groaned as I opened the dryer door and realized all of the 50 ties of those 25 aprons had twisted together into a huge big knot.

Not only was I going to have to untangle them all, but the aprons were not going to be folded until I got them all loose. It was going to be a long morning.

I sat down with the pile of aprons on my lap and investigated the knot.

It was enormous.

As I tried to decide where to begin, the Lord brought to my mind the tangled knot of problems I had been praying and stewing about all morning. There were problems within a group I was part of, and people's anger had flared at each other.

People were talking about other people, there was a lot of accusation and everyone was looking to me to sort it out.

Sometimes I don't like being the leader!

I realized this big knot of apron strings was very much like the mess I found myself in with these people; and I began to wonder if God wasn't trying to teach me a lesson through it.

My first inclination with the aprons was to throw them all out. Of course, I wasn't at liberty to do that, nor could I just cut all the ties and have anything useable left. It is interesting to me that when we find ourselves in a knot of interpersonal relationships, sometimes we have a strong desire to just quit or run away.

It's tempting to think that if the other person was out of our life, everything would be great.

In relationships, like my apron mess, that's not possible, nor is it wise.

With a sigh, I separated the strings out as much as I could to get at the middle.

As I did, I prayed that God would show me what specifically I had done to create or to further the relational chaos my group was in. Although I didn't start it, I had listened to people as they complained. Sometimes I added my two cents, for which I asked the Lord's forgiveness.

Other times I just kept quiet, but even then my silence was taken as agreement because I did not speak up.

I recognized that I had done little to stop the escalation of the problems, hoping they would ?just go away? or ?sort themselves out.? I admit God has to remind me often that, as a leader, I have responsibilities to deal with things and that I cannot just look the other way.

Another sigh.

I got to the middle and began to pull on loose ties, and follow through one at a time to untangle it from the others. With each string, I prayed about the various individuals in the situation and asked God to work in their hearts, to give them love for each other and to show me what I had to do.

One by one, and little by little, the ties were loosened and as I would free one, another would fall out of the knot as well. I was able to see how God wanted me to deal with the relationships and help others towards forgiveness.

He showed me that I should calmly work at each situation, person by person; stop listening to gossip, and actually ask people to stop talking; stick up for someone who is not present; try to see both sides, or wait until I hear both sides before commenting; pray for each individual; forgive those I had to forgive; stop picking up other people's offenses ? these are all things I can do to help.

Being an example in love, in speech and in attitude will go a long way.

Eventually my apron strings were all untangled and I got everything folded.

It wasn't as hard as I originally thought and it didn't take all that long; just long enough for God to teach me a good lesson that I won't soon forget.

How amazing His grace is towards us! I'm thankful I can find Him in the mundane things (even housework) and that He takes the time to remind me of things I should have known.

If you watch for Him, I pray that you will find Him too in the day-to-day circumstances of your life.

**By Ann McCallum, Executive Director**