

## **Straight From the Heart**

*Do you see a man who is skilful in his work? He will stand before kings, he will not stand before obscure men. Proverbs 22:29 RSV*

*A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men. Proverbs 18:16 RSV*

*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Exodus 20:7 ESV*

*The purpose in man's mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. Proverbs 20:5 RSV*

Jordan wanted someone who would make a commitment to her. When Edward, her boyfriend of five years, said he wanted to talk about their relationship, she was expecting an engagement ring for her birthday. Instead he gave her the key to his apartment and asked her to move in with him.

Why do you think Jordan was so disappointed?

Carla knew that Jordan wanted commitment and thought she would help by replying to a personal ad in a country magazine in Jordan's name. At first Jordan was upset, but decided to go and meet the man in the ad. Later when Edward was jealous and did propose, Jordan knew that it was because he felt forced to do it. She returned his ring, because she wanted to marry someone who wanted to be married to her. For Edward, marriage was more like a business arrangement. Jordan wanted more.

What does commitment mean to you? What kinds of commitments have you made to others?

When Tyler (whose sister had put the ad in the magazine) met Jordan he knew right away that she was a city girl who would never fit into their community. Jordan's background, though, was different than Tyler imagined. She loved horses and made friends easily. He turned out to be different than she thought, also.

Have you ever misjudged someone? Has someone misjudged you?

The loss of Tyler's wife and baby were still very painful to him. To love someone else felt like a betrayal to the ones he had loved so dearly. It was difficult for Tyler to make room in his heart for Jordan when he had never really let go of Sarah and the baby.

Have you ever lost someone you loved? How did you find the strength to go on with life?

When Jordan saw the horse that had died due to "wild horse management" her first response was, "Oh my God." The Bible tells us that we should not take God's name in vain. That means that we should not use God's name in an empty or meaningless way. When we speak His name it should be because we are talking to Him or saying something about Him. Exodus 20:7 tells us that "*God will not hold us guiltless if we take His name in vain.*" Was Jordan's "Oh my God", a quick prayer when she saw the dead horse or was she taking God's name in vain? We will all be held accountable for our words and need to carefully consider how we use God's name when we speak. When we make mistakes God will forgive us if we ask.

When Jordan snapped pictures of Tyler taming the stallion and of the wild herd stampeding across the range, she found her niche in photography. After years of trying to be recognized for her pictures, she finally landed an art show of her own. The triumph of the show seemed empty after the joy she felt on the ranch. When Tyler came to the art show leading the colt as a "bride price" Jordan knew that his proposal meant that he wanted her to be part of everything in his life. *Proverbs 21:5 says, The purpose in a man's mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.* It took both Tyler and Jordan time to see what they really wanted in life. When they found it they were willing to make a commitment to each other for life. What do you want in life? Ask God to help you find it.

*Dear Lord, we all want someone who will make a commitment to us. Thank You that You have committed Yourself to us forever. You have promised that You will never leave us or forsake us. Thank You that You want to be our beloved Father. Show us how to be the beloved children that You created us to be. Help us in our relationships. Let our lives honor you. In Jesus name, Amen.*