



MY CHIPS AND SALSA LESSON

KEY SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 41:12-13, Matthew 10:16

I ate lunch at a restaurant that serves Mexican food, and the salsa happened to be extra good that day, so I decided to do what I had never done and that was to take my extra chips and salsa home with my other leftovers. I asked for to-go boxes for “all of it,” gesturing to my waiter that I wanted enough containers to take home the leftovers from my meal, plus what I had not eaten of my complimentary, “You get them just for showing up” chips and salsa.

He quickly returned, but with only one box, so I asked again for a container for my chips and salsa. He disappeared for much longer the second time, and when he returned, he had brought out a brand new serving in its own little white bag and foam container. I told him that I could have just taken mine home, and thanked him for what I thought was a very kind gesture.

I took my leftovers and made my way to the front of the restaurant. When I handed my ticket to the cashier, I found out that the chips and salsa I had just been given were more of a “Your free chips stay with us, and these raise your bill by \$3” gesture.

I asked if they charged extra for the chips and salsa, and the cashier said, “Yes. Nine dollars,” repeating the total I was being asked to pay. And I said, “But I asked to just take mine home with me that you gave me for free.” And he just repeated, very abruptly, “Nine dollars.”

So, I paid the nine dollars for my \$6 meal, and decided that the salsa didn’t really taste so good anymore.

I struggled with it all the way home. I felt robbed. But then God, Who had been listening to my story while I drove my little white sack of chips home, reminded me of something I had learned almost three years prior when I was starting my life as a blogger and author. “People are always looking to get something for free. The internet is full of people who give away for free what you are trying to sell. So, when you can, give it away. Give away information. Give away help. You can’t be robbed of something if you have given it away.”

Yes, Lord.

(continued)

“...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**”



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I tweaked the thought a bit and repeated it to myself several times. “Wendi, you can’t be stolen from if you give yourself away. Give away your love. Give away your kindness. Give away your patience. Generously. God will take care of the rest. Trust Him, so you won’t find yourself charging extra for free chips and salsa.” Admittedly, it still took a little while to sink in.

Like a full sponge you’re asking to soak up more water, I happened to already be on “Please stop taking from me” overload that day. In the preceding several weeks I had had to deal with several different companies who had not delivered what they had promised. By the time I had encountered the last customer service representative who had said, like so many of the others, “I don’t know why they told you that; we can’t do that,” I was so overwhelmed that I finally just told the representative, “I just want you to keep your word.”

My chips and salsa, which were slowly starting to become less of a sore spot, were my reminder that I was still taking on the battles as my own rather than letting them be the Lord’s.

God reminded me of verses I had kept running into in Isaiah 41 over those same few weeks, including this one: *“Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them”* (verse 12). And the reason I won’t find them is because God will deal with them, if I let Him.

Does that mean there is going to be a “Hello! My name is Door Mat” sticker on my shirt from now on? Hardly. There is still a time for everything, and sometimes that includes insisting that dishonesty and deception stop in that very moment. After all, we are told that we will be sent *“out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves”* (Matthew 10:16). If that means speaking up, silence is no longer golden. And if that means quietly paying for some chips and salsa, well, you know.

The peace will come when God has shown which battles are to be fought in the moment and which are to be walked away from for Him to handle behind the scenes, however He will. He keeps better books. His supply is endless. He knows how to repay.

He can even send a reminder of all those things—and restore some joy—through a little thing like a chips and salsa lesson.

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