



Horsin' Around The Ranch



Heartland Youth Ranch

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by Susan Schauer

A couple years ago my truck driving skills were put to the test. My farmer husband asked if I thought I could drive the truck up to the ranch where he was going to start harvesting corn. I was busy working on the computer at the time so nodded in the affirmative, thinking to myself how hard can it be? I used to drive the farm truck for my dad as a teen hauling silage. I was sure it would all come back and would be a piece of cake. Without looking up I made a motion with my hand as to if it was a stick shift or not? You see this is an old truck. He said "Yes," that's when I looked up and said "Well, are the markings still on the shifter?" He said no but he would put a piece of duck tape on the dash with the markings so I would know where the gears were. I nodded and went back to my computer work. As he was leaving he paused looked back and said, "You might need a pillow, the seat is kind of sunk in." That should have been my first clue that this might be a little harder than I thought.

Curt headed up to the ranch with the combine and when he was almost there he would call and I would bring the truck. So at the designated time I headed out to the truck. When I opened the door my first thought was this is going to take more than one pillow. That sunk in area in the seat was like a crater on the moon. After gathering several pillows and filling in the crater, I could see over the steering wheel. I was off, well kind of. I killed the engine a couple times but finally got going and chugged down the drive way and on to the highway.

The trip to the ranch went pretty well. I made it to the field without incident. I was actually pretty proud of myself. After filling the truck, we headed to the elevator. Curt drove back and I watched as he kept using this red button on the shifter but he said nothing about me needing to know what it was or what it did. We went to the elevator; the

first stop was at the moisture probe. There was a phone you would pick up and tell the person in the office who you were and who the corn belonged to. Then the probe would come down and suck up some corn and test the moisture content. Curt's instructions were to put on the emergency brake so the truck would not move and don't move forward until the buzzer went off, indicating the probe was out of the truck box. When the buzzer went off he took the emergency brake off and we moved forward. My question for him was how do you know if the emergency brake is on or not. I noticed there were no lights on the dash to indicate a brake being on or off. He answered, "You'll know." I filed that thought in the back of my mind for now. We moved forward to the scale where we stopped and watched four different lights the one that would light up indicated where we would unload the corn. The first two options were the easy ones to the elevator. The next was the big corn pile and another was the wet corn pile where you would have to drive the truck onto a ramp and have it centered for unloading. The light for us was the easy one: the elevator. We pulled forward when the man standing there gave the signal. He opened the box gate and signaled for us to start raising the box. This was where I was shown how to pull out two red knobs and let out the clutch while watching the man in the rear view mirror. When he indicated I should pause the box for awhile then continue to raise it up fully when he indicated. When all the corn was unloaded he would give the signal to move forward. I was instructed to remember to put the box down too. Then we headed back to the scale for the weigh sheet which came out in a box that was not easy to reach (for me anyway). "That's all there is to it," Curt says. "REALLY!" was what I was thinking.

We took the truck across the

road and left it to go home and get the neighbor's truck which Curt would drive to the ranch. So I headed back to town to get our truck and head back to the ranch. I was again proud of myself as I got the truck in reverse and headed out of the parking lot without killing it several times. Pulled out on the highway and only a few feet down the road the truck jerked violently and died... right there on the highway! I quickly got it started again as cars were veering around me on both sides, one of which was the ditch. It again jerked violently and died. By this time I was in tears and just wanted to get out, throw up my hands, and run away. Then something came to the front of my mind. "You'll know." I looked down at the brake handle that was still up. Ok, is it on when down and off when up or is it off when down and on when up? I pushed it down and started the truck again. We chugged off the highway and I promptly called Curt. I said, "Is the brake on when the handle is down or up?" He said up. I found out what the "You'll know" was, that's for sure!

After all of that trauma I headed back to the ranch. I made it there again without incident. Curt arrived shortly and filled the truck. He said, "Okay, take it in." "Nope," I said, "you are going with me at least one time. This time I am driving." So we both headed back to the elevator with me at the driver's wheel this time. It was a lot different driving it loaded. I didn't make it up the first hill. So I received a few more driving instructions on when to down shift and when to gun it. When we got out on the highway Curt looked at me and noticed I wasn't using the red button on the shifter. He said, "You didn't drive all the way up here without using that, did you?" "Why, yes I did and don't say anything to me about it. You never explained the use of the red button so don't expect me to use something I don't know how to

use.” So then I received instructions on the use and purpose of the red button. As we approached the right turn in the highway I geared down, clutched, pumped the brake and took the corner. Curt, in a rather loud voice, said “That was way too fast for that sharp of a corner with a load on.” “Well,” I said, “I had all my weight on the brakes, not much else I could do. Besides, the load is leveled out now.” He didn’t think that was funny.

We made it to the elevator without any other incidents. I stopped at the probe, announced who we were, waited for the buzzer and after taking the brake off moved to the scale. Again the light showed we would unload at the elevator. When we were ready to pull in I told Curt I was just going to get out and ask the man to drive the truck in and unload it for me. He said, “He would not do that.” I said, “I think he would if I was standing there crying and holding up a whole line of trucks to be unloaded.” He gave me a look like don’t even think about doing that. Well, we got unloaded and headed back to the ranch. After filling the truck again he told me to head to town. I started to go but the truck died several times. Curt got back into the truck and told me to “feather” the gas pedal. I just looked at him and said “I don’t have a feather!” “Ok, just pump it,” he says. Finally I got the truck moving slowly. I looked at him and asked if he could just bail out. “I am really not going that fast and if I stop I know I will kill the engine again.” I just got **that** look so I stopped the truck so he could get out. And yes I did kill the engine several more times before getting out of the field.

I made the first bunch of hills without killing the engine but didn’t do so well when I had to stop at the stop sign by the highway. The engine died and the truck started rolling backward and there is not much control when the truck isn’t running. Quickly I got it started and roared out onto the highway. I am sure the lady that lives by that road was wondering who was driving that truck.

The elevator was closed when I arrived so didn’t have to unload. I went over to get something to eat and couldn’t even take a bite because I was so worked up and upset about my truck driving day. When Curt got back he said “Thanks,” and ate his sandwich. One bright spot was that the hospital had called and asked if I could work the rest of the week. Without hesitation I said “Yes,” then informed Curt he would have to find another truck driver as I had other plans the rest of the week. When I saw the guy that took my truck driving job I shook his hand and thanked him for saving my life. I think he thought I was joking - I wasn’t!

Instructions are such an important part of our lives. It is important that the one receiving the instructions understands them, the language and terminology the one giving the instructions is using. There is one more thing that is so important for the one receiving the instructions. They need to have faith in the one giving the instructions. If they do not have faith that the one giving instructions knows what they are talking about all their words are of no value.

I am so glad our heavenly Father who created us and knows everything about us gave us the Bible, His Word, the best instruction book ever. The more I read and study the Bible the more I learn about Him and how I am to live this gift of life He has given to me.

As beautiful as the Bible is with all its history, lessons, and instructions, if I do not have faith in the One who inspired it, the true Author, can I really understand it? I would say no. Yes, we can gain more knowledge about the Bible but to truly understand the depth of its message we need the Spirit of God. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message of Christ.” The message of Christ, John 3:16 “For God so loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only son that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” In John 14:6, Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus offers us the gift of salvation in His sacrifice on the cross. The forgiveness of our sins; the penalty paid by Him. What does all this mean? If you have faith in Jesus and understand His love for you and accept it by faith and are filled with His Spirit, “You’ll know!”

Upcoming Events

Holiday Open House: Saturday, December 10: 4 pm—8 pm. Join us for food, fun and fellowship!

Volunteer/staff training: March 2017, date to be announced

2017 Riding Season opens April 1, 2017

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